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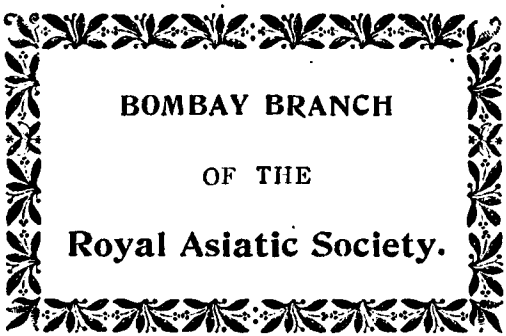

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THE CAUCASUS, PERSIA, AND TURKEY IN ASIA

VOL. II.

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JOURNEY

IN

THE CAUCASUS, PERSIA,

AND

TURKEY IN ASIA

By LIEUT. BARON MAX von THIELMANN

SECRETARY OF THE IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY AT ST. PETERSBURG

DOCTOR JURIS, BERLIN

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a c.

TRANSLATED

By CHARLES HENEAGE, F.R.G.S.

SECOND SECRETARY IN HER MAJESTY'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.

WITH MAP AND WOODCUTS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1875

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Errata.

Page 11, line 16, *for* the walls of the enclosure *read* the walls of enclosure

„ 56, „ 5, „ Thieves have not, however, as yet suffered *read* Thieves have not as yet suffered

„ 72, „ 27, „ both the servants as well as the horses *read* both the servants and the horses

„ 136, „ 5, „ field of ruin *read* field of ruins

„ 163, „ 5, „ grams *read* qrans

„ 210, „ 8, „ a few days later, on *read* a few days later on

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CHAPTER V.

PETROWSK TO TABREEZ.

Sail on the Caspian Sea—Derbend—Bakù—Sacred Fires—Lenkoran—Astara—Mountain Pass leading from Talysch to Azerbijaun—Namin—Persian Hospitality—Ardebil—Mausoleum of Sheik Sefi—Persian Tscherwadars—Road to Tabreez—Serab—Main Road—Arrival at Tabreez—Tabreez—European Colony—Villa of Persian Heir-Apparent—Old Castle—Situation of Tabreez—Blue Mosque—Trade of Tabreez—Bazaar—Carpets—Condition of Affairs in Persia.

THE steamer started on October 13, at daybreak. Alas! we were soon to experience that in flying from Charybdis we were only rushing into Scylla, for all the dirt which we had left behind us at Petrowsk was cleanliness as compared with the state of things on board the 'Turkomaun.' Nor was the name of the ship ill-chosen, for the Turkomaun population of the western shores of the Caspian does not stand in the odour of cleanliness. As for a cabin, properly so called, no such accommodation existed on board the vessel; there were merely two structures on the deck, the larger one for the male sex, the smaller one for the ladies, who numbered only one

or two. But there was a total absence of a third establishment which in hotels is always marked by cabalistic letters, and this deficiency rendered the sojourn on board wellnigh intolerable to European nerves and noses. Our fellow-passengers in the first class—about half a dozen—had evidently reconciled themselves to the inconveniences of the Caspian Sea and to the peculiarities of the ship, for they lay scattered about the pseudo cabin, apparently quite unconcerned, and even partook of the meals which an indescribably dirty being served up twice a day. As for ourselves, although certainly not spoilt, at least up to the present time, by luxury of accommodation and excellency of food, we could scarcely touch the repast. The fore-deck passengers were mostly Persians and Tartars. Nine-tenths of these lay clustered together and slept through their misfortunes; the remaining tenth kept awake, smoking their kalians and staring listlessly in the air.

Had the ship been a little more tolerable, our sail might have been a very pleasant one, for the weather was splendid and the sea as smooth as glass. To our right, at a distance of about four miles from the ship, rose up the promontories of Daghestan, and in the background towered, freshly covered with snow, the crests of the Karakaitach and of the Kazikumych. In the afternoon we cast anchor in the roadstead of Derbend. Unfortunately our brief stay did not admit of our going on shore to view that interesting town. Petzholdt and Dumas, as well as travellers with whom I have talked on the subject, agree that Derbend amply

repays a visit; and, had it not been for the bad condition of the roads, consequent on the heavy rains, we certainly should have taken the land route to Baku, *viâ* Derbend and Kouba. The town of Derbend extends like a long thread from the mountains to the sea, running between walls crowned with battlements, and it presents an exceedingly picturesque aspect. Its interior is said to bear the usual Tartar character, and its chief sight is a mosque in which Mahomet is supposed to have preached in person. This latter incident seems rather improbable, since the prophet never set foot in these regions. The priesthood of this mosque distinguishes itself, even to the present day, by its fanaticism and by its intolerance. Notwithstanding all our endeavours we were not able to discern from the ship the slightest sign of the Caucasian wall, the other great sight of Derbend. Starting from the town, the wall runs for many miles across the mountains, and at one time barred the principal pass leading from Eastern Asia to Europe; for even in the Middle Ages it was considered an impossibility to traverse the barren and inhospitable Caucasus in an oblique line. This wall, of which important remains still crown the mountains, is, like everything stupendous in the East, the creation of Iskender; that is, of Alexander the Great. Its original design may not improbably have been to separate the plundering nomad hordes which infested the Northern Steppe from the Khanates of Transcaucasia, and from those of the North of Persia, which districts in the Middle Ages were in a highly flourishing condition.

We became acquainted in the roadstead of Derbend with a curious phenomenon, for which we had been prepared by the French naval officer at Bottlich. Whilst the sea was apparently as smooth as a mirror the steamer suddenly began to roll most violently, probably the result of the sea setting in and causing a ground-swell to rise almost imperceptibly. We weighed anchor about sunset, and the beautiful moonlight night reconciled us to the defects of our temporary abode. But the next morning the picture was entirely changed. Instead of lofty, snow-crowned mountains, only the barren, desolate coast of the peninsula of Apscheron was visible to the eye, and the bright sky and calm sea of yesterday was replaced by threatening clouds, bitter winds, and foaming waves. In the course of the forenoon we sailed between barren islands impregnated with naphtha, situated to the east of the peninsula; and about mid-day we reached Cape Schachoff, which, projecting in the form of a sickle, shuts in the peninsula of Apscheron. This forms the extreme point of the Caucasus, and was the easternmost point of our journey. From Cape Schachoff our sail was rather a slow one, owing to the contrary winds, and it was already half-past three in the afternoon before we reached our moorings in the harbour of Bakù. On landing Ali startled us with the unpleasant intelligence that he had neglected to provide himself with a passport at Kutais, and that he was therefore unable to continue the journey with us across the frontier. Visions rose before my eyes of difficulties and loss of time occasioned

by the procuring of official papers, and I consequently abandoned all idea of seeing anything of Bakù, more especially as the steamer was to start the next morning for Persia. Fortunately things turned out better than I expected. The Governor, to whom I at once applied, gave instructions to have a passport drawn up enabling Ali to leave the country, his papers being otherwise *en règle.* There remained the afternoon and evening for a rapid view of the town and for a hurried visit to the so-called 'sacred fires.' The town has very little to offer beyond confusion and bustle, which are characteristic of all places in the East. Its position in the midst of an utterly barren and desolate country was a very dreary one, and even in the harbour there was little animation. The streets along the harbour contain large stone houses, recently built, and some good shops, where even sardines and *patés de foie gras* are sold. The interior of the town is altogether Oriental. The palace of the former Khans is an extensive building, falling into decay, with a beautifully decorated gateway, the delicate arabesques of which are only imperfectly seen from the narrow street; a better view is, however, obtained from the roof of one of the houses opposite. The only other sight is a curiously-shaped tower on the sea. Dumas tells a very romantic story respecting this tower. A Khan of Bakù caused it to be constructed; and to gratify a caprice of his daughter had it built up higher and higher. When the edifice was completed the daughter threw herself from it into the sea. Tenderness of feeling and love, or whatever

motive inspired her resolution, are sentiments too little known in the East to justify a romance which would more thoroughly befit the region of the Rhine than that of Bakù. The bazaar presented a scene of animation, but we noticed nothing new or extraordinary. Our last Russian banknote was converted into Persian qrans by a money-changer, who had nearly a bushel of silver coins piled up in front of him. This precaution on our part ultimately proved to be quite superfluous, for in the North of Persia the small Russian coins (20 and 15 kopecks each) are preferred to the native qrans, which are frequently counterfeit, generally scratched, and always miserably stamped. Russian silver is at a premium of 10 per cent. as compared with Russian gold, which is also liked in Persia.

We drove in the evening to the sacred fires. A Russian officer, who spoke both Turkish and Persian fluently, was obliging enough to procure carriages for us and to accompany us himself. He had formerly been employed in the adjustment of the Turco-Persian frontier, and was fully acquainted with everything concerning those districts. We owe principally to him the first correct information which we received respecting the route from Tabreez to Mossoul, regarding which nothing was known at Tiflis and very little at Tabreez. The carriages which he had ordered for us were elegant *calèches*, drawn by first-rate horses, and even the Tartar coachmen were smart and clean; the fare for the drive there and back (twenty-three miles) was seven roubles for each carriage. After winding their way through

the busy narrow streets, the coachmen set off at a sharp trot, and we soon found ourselves in the barren Steppe, out of sight of the town. As night set in we could discern a bright glare on the horizon, and an hour later we found ourselves in the midst of a sea of flames bursting forth from the ground in all directions. We first drove into the courtyard of the Kokereff petroleum distillery, which was contiguous to the Temple of the Sacred Fires. The distillery was lit up by huge jets of gas, and with its whitewashed walls presented a magical appearance in spite of the commonplace object of the illumination. The director of the distillery, a German, very obligingly showed us over his establishment, and also explained to us the nature of the curious phenomenon which we had just witnessed, and respecting which so much nonsense has been said and written. The whole of the soil of the peninsula of Apscheron is saturated with naphtha. The most powerful spring is some versts distant from Surachaneh, the spot where the fire-temple is situated; this spring lies near Balachaneh, and rises to a height of thirty-five feet. Other less important springs are utilised by the Tartars, who collect the naphtha in jugs, which they bring to the distilleries. These naphtha-springs are, however, only indirectly connected with the fires, for the sulphureous vapours which issue from the naphtha-beds pass through the natural crevices of the ground and at times reappear at a great distance from the original springs. These gases are very combustible, and in many places it is merely

necessary to bore a hole in the ground and to apply a lighted match in order immediately to produce a powerful flame. Formerly these gases were chiefly used for domestic purposes; chalk was burned with them, by simply placing lumps of chalk over the flames in the form of a gridiron, upon which bread was baked; and the gases were also utilised for the purpose of lighting up the huts. The gases now constitute an important industry in connection with the manufacture of petroleum; and besides the above-mentioned Kokereff distillery there are other large establishments: those of Mirzájeff, &c. Large brick reservoirs are constructed wherever a regular supply of gases exists; a constant influx of gases is thus secured in the reservoirs, which gases are conveyed, by means of pipes, to their different destinations. The supply of gases is so abundant that in the Kokereff manufactory not only are the steam-boilers and distillery apparatus heated by means of them, but the jets used for lighting the courtyard are left burning in the daytime. Flames appear even on the sea near Bakù; but these, probably, do not arise from the gases, but from the liquid naphtha, which floats on the upper surface of the water. This display of fire on the water is said to be exceedingly grand in calm weather; but the slightest breeze at once extinguishes the flames. The interior of the distillery presented nothing worthy of notice. The naphtha—which, in its primitive state, resembles green carriage-grease, has a strong smell, and is highly combustible—is transformed into a clear and colourless

liquid after a twofold process of distillation. A lighted match thrown into it expires without igniting it. The total production of the distilleries, after deducting the inconsiderable consumption in the country, is sent to Russia, where the use of kerosine—as petroleum is there called—has almost entirely replaced that of vegetable oil. Strangely enough, the barrels, which are manufactured at the distilleries by means of machinery specially constructed for the purpose—manual labour being too expensive here, and there being no coopers in the East—are made from timber cut in the Government of Wjatka, in North-eastern Russia. The transport, over fully 1,400 miles, on the rivers Kama and Wolga and on the Caspian Sea, would thus seem to be cheaper than the transport from the forests of the Kuba district, which is close by, or from the forests of the district of Lenkoran, about ninety-three miles distant, which latter are very rich in timber, and reach down to the sea. But the chief difficulty, as I was told by the director of the distillery, consists in obtaining workmen to fell the wood during winter; the natives are not used to such hard work, and Russian labour would prove too expensive.

On leaving the distillery we entered the Fire Temple, called Ateschgah. The priest received us at the threshold, and conducted us to a tidy-looking cell, possessing an altar, a mat, and some flames. He was a tall, fine-looking man, with noble features and a dignified deportment. His dress consisted of a long white gown, and a turban of the same colour. The priest

is sent here for a limited time by the Parsee community at Bombay; after a lapse of some years he is replaced. Now and then a pilgrim from the east of Persia (Jezd, Kermaun) or from India makes his appearance, and remains for several months or years at the sacred place. During centuries there have been no native Gebers (fire-worshippers), for since the fall of the Sassanian realm at the battle of Kadesia, Islamism has swept away without pity the old national religion of the Irans; and with the exception of the prosperous Parsee communities, which fled to India, there only exist in Eastern Persia isolated groups in a very abased position. After the priest's welcome a ceremony began; but respecting the mysteries which followed I am in doubt whether they were performed in honour of us or offered unto Ahuramazda. First of all a multitude of flames were lit on and about the altar by means of Vienna lucifers, a box of which, placed near to an 'eternal flame' at the corner of the cell, contrasted strangely with the sanctity of the place, as did also several coloured lithographs pasted on the walls. The priest then approached in front of these flames, unfolded his turban, so that his splendid black curls fell back over his shoulders, and girded his loins with the turban. After many genuflections he intoned a kind of liturgy with a pleasing voice and with rather melodious cadences, accompanying himself with a small bell. The finale consisted in a votive offering of sugarcandy made to a small idol on the altar; the sugarcandy was then presented to us, and

the rouble which we tendered as a return offering was not 'refused with dignity' by the priest. The temple is reduced to the condition of maintaining its priests by means of small gratuities collected from individual travellers and by the 'hiring out' of its flames for the purposes of burning chalk. When the ceremony was over, during which the temperature of the cell, owing to the multitude of flames, had risen to an unbearable heat, we went to the courtyard of the temple, where a magnificent illumination was awaiting us. From the battlements on the outer walls and from the four towers of a square building situated in the centre burst forth flames lighting up as if by magic the whole place. The apparatus for conducting the gases to the walls and towers is said to have been more complete in former times. The walls of the enclosure, as well as the central building, respecting the purpose of which I could obtain no information, were covered with inscriptions in memory of pilgrims who had visited the spot; these inscriptions were almost exclusively written in Devanâgari characters; none were in Sanscrit; some appeared to be nothing better than calligraphic scribbles, for the priest, who understood Hindoostani, Hindi, and presumably also Parsee, confessed himself unable to discover any sense in them. The priest, according to his own statement, was ignorant of Zend and also of Sanscrit. The conversation was carried on by means of the Russian officer in Persian, of which language the priest had acquired some knowledge. After enjoying a final view from the roof of the temple of

the spectacle of flame around us, and after the priest had performed an awful concert on the bells in the central building of the courtyard, we reseated ourselves in our carriages. A perfect deluge of rain overtook us on the way back. Whilst we were seeking refuge from the adverse elements under the hood of the carriage the coachman on the box seemed to grow more merry, although wind and rain lashed him in the face; in reply to our question whether he was not inconvenienced by the weather, he replied with the utmost stolidity: 'What do I care if I get wet? Barley will become cheaper, and that's what I care for!' Immediately on our arrival in Bakû we went on board the steamèr which was to convey us to Astara or to Lenkoran; she was the 'Grand Duke Michael,' a vessel belonging to the 'Kawkaz-i-Merkurij' Company. She was, as a rule, a craft much calumniated, and certainly, after our experiences on board the 'Turkomaun,' she seemed a floating palace. During our short stay on board we had no hardships to endure, either from dirt or from bad fare.

At daybreak the 'Grand Duke Michael' weighed anchor, and steamed off on her course through the stormy sea. Gusts of wind, accompanied by heavy rain, rendered the voyage somewhat unpleasant, and the passengers did not exhibit much appetite at breakfast. The man at the wheel, a German, who expressed his surprise at finding countrymen of his travelling to Persia by this route, advised us by all means to land at Lenkoran, for the roadstead of Astara was generally

unsafe, and the prevailing state of the weather might make it impossible for the vessel to approach the shore. Should we, however, persist in continuing our journey by steamer, we incurred the risk of having to go to Enzeli, or even of being taken on as far as Astrabad. We decided on following the advice of the sailor; and thus Ali, to his inexpressible joy, obtained an opportunity of seeing once more his home and his old mother. In the forenoon we passed the roadstead of Saljan, in front of the Kura Delta, and here a large number of vessels had taken refuge. There are important fisheries at Saljan, the produce of which provides the Christian population with Lenten food; the Mahomedans, on the other hand, never eat fish. There is said to be an abundance, too, of caviare at Saljan. The river Kura is almost of no importance as a means of communication with the interior of the country, as its stream is only navigable for a short distance above its junction with the Arax in the Mughan Steppe.

At 2 P.M. the 'Grand Duke Michael' lay-to in the roadstead of Lenkoran. The land, at a distance of four nautical miles, looked like a green streak, but the mountains were quite enveloped in clouds. A shot was fired on board the steamer, as a signal, and after some time a boat came out towards us. The getting out of the steamer into the boat was no easy operation, as the sea ran high and the little nutshell of a boat danced up and down by the side of the steamer. At last the men contrived to reach the gangway; we tumbled in as best we could, and the baggage flew in after.

us—it was a perfect miracle that none of our trunks fell into the sea or alighted on our heads. The boat's crew had a hard job of it to get to shore with their small weak-bladed oars. When they found they were making no progress they had recourse to invocations to Mohamed, to Ali, and to other Shee-ite saints. At last, after a thundering 'Jâ Mehemed, jâ Ali!' on the part of the crew, the surge threw us up on the beach, and a crowd of ragged natives rushed down to rescue us from the waves and pull us upon dry land. They were successful as regards the first particular, but less so as regards the second, for the shore consisted of a deep virgin swamp, like that of Poti at the time of Dumas' visit. A petty official, who had been apprised of the arrival of Europeans, placed his lodging at our disposal, as there was no hotel or Crown-house at Lenkoran. We followed him through several swamps and past low wooden houses, and to our surprise found ourselves in a small neat room, as usual with a number of cheap German prints pasted against the walls. On the present occasion they represented a tiger-hunt in the East Indies, and an Englishman perched on an elephant was shooting into a crowd of tigers. There was also a stag-hunt in Germany, and the wicked 'Junker' was riding about amongst the peasants' cornfields. To judge from the number of applicants who settled down in front of the door waiting to receive a *pour-boire*, the whole population of Lenkoran must have assisted in carrying our baggage. However, their demands were not exorbitant. A visit which I paid to the chief of

the district was no easy task, considering the rain and the condition of the road. The Chief of the district seemed much amazed at our courage in travelling in such weather. At first he told me pointblank that it would be impossible for us to think of continuing our journey, as the rivers were swollen and impassable; but the notion of an unlimited stay in this den of frogs could not be entertained, especially as the weather foreboded more rain, and as the rivers would consequently become more impassable. We had therefore to consider how we could best reach as speedily as possible the dry and elevated plateau of Azerbijaun. The Chief of the district acceded with great reluctance to my application for horses the next morning, and only did so on the distinct assurance that I took all responsibility on myself. The conversation then turned upon tiger-shooting in the vicinity of Lenkoran; to my disappointment I learned that, in consequence of the high premiums offered for the destruction of tigers, those animals had so diminished in number that in his district, during a three years' residence, he had not succeeded in obtaining one really good skin; some few tigers were shot every year, but they were generally of an inferior kind. Altogether, the tiger seemed to be a less ferocious beast at Lenkoran and in the Persian provinces of Gilaun and Mazanderaun than in the East Indies; instances of cattle being destroyed were very rare, and the animal is said in this neighbourhood never to attack man. The famous tiger which, according to Dumas' account, established itself on the road

leading from Lenkoran to Astara, and claimed as a tribute of each passer-by a piece of meat or a chicken, is of course a myth; but the other story, of the tiger which penetrated into the house of a Russian settler and was slain with a hatchet by the resolute peasant-woman, is founded upon actual fact.

After the question of the horses had been settled with the Chief of the district I set out homewards through the dirt and wet, and, thanks to the lantern carried by my host, I escaped falling into the deep pools which lay along my path. Ali returned, much to our regret, in a very sorrowful state of mind; he had found his mother quite blind, and his only sister was dead.

The Chief of the district kept his word and directed horses to be sent for. His orders seemed to have met with a strong passive resistance, as the Cossacks appointed to escort us had to rise early the next morning to fetch each single horse and attendant. It was ten o'clock before we effected a start. Meanwhile the rain had ceased, and the atmosphere had become pleasantly mild; the mountains were still enveloped in a dense mist, and with some difficulty we made out the enormous forests covering them. At a short distance beyond the town, the crumbling walls of which had once been stormed by the heroic Kotljarewski, we had to encounter the first obstacle mentioned by the Chief of the district. The Lenkoranka was much swollen, and shot over its bed—some hundred paces in width—with the rapidity of an arrow. A boat cut out of a single tree had been provided for us and our baggage. The

horses then, stripped of their saddles, swam without hesitation across the rapid stream. The crossing over was thus accomplished without danger, and was not so difficult a performance as the Chief of the district wished to make out. We looked upon this as a good omen for the future. One of the Cossacks, desirous to exhibit his prowess by fording the stream on horseback, was, both himself and his horse, borne away by the current, and for a while disappeared under the water; fortunately for him, the stream carried him on to a sandbank, whence he managed to reach the opposite bank. His spirits did not seem to suffer by this mishap, and after receiving a present from us for the drenching which he had got, he rode back to the town to dry himself. Our road now kept along the seashore, often approaching it so closely that the waves washed our horses' hoofs. On our right were dense bushes, luxuriant with verdure; these were succeeded by extensive swamps, grown over with reeds, enlivened by a multitude of ducks, pelicans, and beautiful white herons. Further on we traversed extensive groves of pomegranate-trees, the ripe fruit of which stood invitingly within our reach. The flavour of the juicy core, not unpleasantly acid, is very refreshing on hot days, and even in fever districts this fruit is considered harmless. After crossing two more rivers—the first by means of a ferry-boat, and the second by means of a bridge, which looked to be in the last stage of decay —we entered, early in the afternoon, the town of Astara, situated on the Russo-Persian frontier. The

officer at the Russian frontier who examined our passports repeated in substance what we had been already told by the district chief of Lenkoran, viz. that the Astaratschai was quite impassable, and, consequently, the road along the Persian side was unavailable; on the other hand, the road along the Russian side was too dangerous to be thought of in the present bad state of the weather. The conclusion was: wait a few days—perhaps the weather will change for the better. But our determination to proceed finally carried the day, and we were promised horses for the next morning.

All the necessary arrangements being made, we rode on to our menzil (Persian designation for lodging), the house of one Mirza Nesrullah, formerly a well-to-do merchant at Schemachà, who had lost all his property through the earthquake of that town, and who now earned his livelihood by doing a small commission business in his native town Astara. He seemed to us to be a man of education, and he received us with great amiability. No sooner had Ali entered the house than he threw his arms round Mirza Nesrullah's neck and embraced him affectionately. It then came out that these two stood to one another in the tender relationship of uncle and nephew. The multitudes of rivers, streams, and brooks in the neighbourhood of Astara induced us to venture upon some inquiry about salmon. Scarcely was the wish expressed when our host told one of his sons to go and catch one. In half an hour's time the latter came back bringing with him a fine fresh salmon; it was the first and last fish which

we were destined to see for many months, for Persians do not eat fish. The staple article of food consists of rice, and the quality of rice which is grown in Persia is excellent. It is mostly eaten in the form of the tschillaw, and is boiled over steam. For long journeys it is boiled until it attains the consistency of bread; in this hard condition it may possibly prove indigestible to European stomachs. The population of the district of Lenkoran (formerly the Khanate Talysch), together with that of the Persian provinces Gilaun and Mazanderaun, is descended from the ancient Medes. The language is a dialect somewhat different from Persian; but the natives, without exception, understand both Turkish and Tartar. Their type indicates a rather strong admixture of Turkish blood; but this will hardly appear strange when borne in mind that they are surrounded on all sides by Turco-Tartar tribes.

The next morning the horses were again slow in arriving. The officer at the frontier told us that there were Persian tscherwadars with plenty of horses on the opposite side of the river, but that the stream being impassable prevented their coming over; he had, therefore, ordered horses to convey us as far as the last Cossack post in the mountain district. The ketchuda (bailiff) of the next Persian village, who had been apprised of our arrival, would provide for our further journey. Having already had sufficient experience of the value of such promises, I got Mirza Nesrullah to inquire from the owners of the horses for what sum they would undertake to convey us the whole way to

Ardebil. These fellows demanded such a ridiculous price that I abandoned further negotiation, and left it to chance to find horses on the other side of the frontier. Having recompensed our kind host with a few presents, amongst which a penknife with several blades especially aroused his admiration, we gradually set out on our march, escorted by no less than twenty-four Cossacks, headed by the adjutant of the frontier officer, who sported a pair of huge india-rubber goloshes. I repeat *gradually*, for some time elapsed before the entire cavalcade was in marching order. The weather was mild, and, but for the swampy condition of the road, our ride might have been very pleasant. The villages which we traversed in the small streak of land between the sea and the mountains consisted of wooden huts, which, like those in Polynesia, rested on high poles, and were only accessible by means of ladders. The vegetable kingdom was well represented, although the creepers did not figure here so prominently as, for instance, in Mingrelia, and the box-tree and the laurel were rather scarce. The animal kingdom had, too, a tropical appearance; and the native bullock was a kind of buffalo, allied to the Indian yak. Cossack posts guarded the frontier at distances varying from three to four versts. The men being apprised of our arrival, mounted guard in full costume. The nearer we approached the mountain range the more arduous the road became. We had to ford across foaming streams and to wade through inundated rice-fields; and often the road only consisted of a narrow, slippery path,

winding between rocky walls and rapid streams. The passage of the Istisu, the largest amongst the tributaries of the Astaratschai, was both difficult and dangerous. We had to proceed with the greatest caution, and not without getting a good drenching did we gain the opposite bank. After four hours' ride we reached the Kaschbinski post, situated some 1,000 feet above the level of the sea, where, according to the assurances of the frontier officer, the Persian ketchuda would have fresh horses awaiting our arrival; but nothing was to be seen either of the horses or of the ketchuda. As for the guard-house it was only in course of construction, and was not yet provided with soldiers; the only occupants of the place being a Russian carpenter from Saratow, who acted as clerk of the works, and two Persian workmen. I asked the adjutant who accompanied us what we had better do under the circumstances, to which he coolly replied we had better wait, as fresh horses would soon be arriving. Before I had time to reply to his stupid talk he had turned his horse round and had decamped, in the full glory of his goloshes, along with the twenty-four Cossacks. The owners of the horses which had conveyed us thither, seeing us destitute of all military support, grew very impatient, and rudely demanded their money and their discharge. To dismiss them would have been the height of imprudence, for we did not feel altogether sure about the existence of the ketchuda and of his horses, to say nothing about the probability of his ever making his appearance. We were thus compelled to

have recourse to a somewhat violent mode of proceeding in order to avoid the alternative of having to carry our baggage ourselves across an almost impracticable pass, some 6,000 feet high. I therefore told the men that there could be no question either of dismissing or paying them, and that they would have to see us, the next morning, to some place where fresh horses could be found. I declined to enter into any negotiations about payment, but promised, when the proper moment came, to give what I thought fair. I also warned each one of them not to attempt to make off quietly during the night, declaring that, if I perceived one horse to be missing the next morning, I would myself ride back to Astara and have every one of them punished by the authorities. This display of firmness led to the anticipated result. After they had retired grumbling for some time and talked the matter over amongst themselves the head man reappeared and expressed his willingness to submit to my demands, and to leave entirely open the question of payment.

Our next proceeding was to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in the building. This was no easy task to perform, for the only portion which had a roof over it consisted of the skeleton of a hayloft; we climbed up into it by means of a machine something between a board and a ladder. The carpenter from Saratow procured us dry wood for cooking purposes; and our German sausages, seasoned with native rice, and washed down with some kachetia from our wine-skin, at last refreshed the inner man, and made us feel

merry and satisfied in spite of dirt and rain. The next morning was dark and rainy. The carpenter told us that the way across the mountain was difficult, and that we could not reach any place of shelter before evening; we therefore made as early a start as possible, left our 'improvised host' some quinine, of which he seemed to stand in great need, and ascended the steep ridge which divides the valleys of the Astaratschai and of the Istisu. The road defied all description. Steep acclivities, in which at places steps had been cut in the rock to afford foothold for the horses, had to be climbed up; the rain had rendered both rock and grass slippery, so that there was no pleasure in riding, especially as there were deep abysses on both sides. Fortunately for us the horses were tolerably sure-footed, notwithstanding their miserable, over-worked appearance, and they seldom stumbled or came down. One of the baggage-horses excited our fullest admiration by its cleverness and sagacity. I have already mentioned this particular incident in the third chapter, in connection with our ride to Wardzia. The scenery must be beautiful in fine weather. As soon as the mist and rain cleared off we looked down upon valleys covered with luxuriant forests, and in the background the landscape was bounded by the sea. There was no sign of tigers or leopards, and a few quills scattered about the forest were the only traces left by the inoffensive porcupine. The higher we ascended the steeper the ridge became, and the cold grew more intense; and when about noon we reached the small plateau at Erze-

bagh (Rizabagh on the five-verst map), situated very little below the pass-level, our horses were dead-beat and ourselves quite benumbed. Fortunately the road became less arduous. At this point it made a bend in a southerly direction and crossed the Astaratchai, the frontier river, near to its source. Whilst some miles lower down this stream was impassable, here it was merely a pretty plashing rivulet. It was precisely 3 P.M. when we—perhaps the first Europeans who ever crossed the pass—quitted Russia and entered the realms of Shah Nasreddin. We soon gained the height of the pass, situated at an altitude of 6,700 feet above the level of the sea, and with it the high plateau of Iran. As when crossing from Grusia into Armenia, or from the Tschetschnià into Daghestan, so here did we find the character of the landscape transformed as if by enchantment. Vegetation ceased, and the mountain range sloped down in soft declines towards the high plateau, whilst it broke off steep and abrupt on the side towards the sea. The level of the plateau is some 5,000 feet above the sea. The aspect of the dreary, yellowish-brown country was not a lively one. Our expectation of beholding Mount Savalandagh, equal in height to Mont Blanc, which was situated at a short distance from us, was not destined to be realised, as heavy grey clouds had settled over Azerbijaun. We were not put to any trouble in finding night-quarters, for Ali knew of a rich landed proprietor, Sultan Achmed Khan, living in the neighbourhood. Ali, when a boy, had on one occasion been driving a donkey laden with

a cargo of oranges to Ardebil, and had met this personage on the road travelling in great state and accompanied by a large retinue of servants, which splendour and magnificence was indelibly engraved upon Ali's mind. From Chanogja, the first Persian village which we entered, and the population of which immediately assembled to stare at us as if we were wild beasts, a horseman was sent off to Namin, the seat of this rich man, to beg a night's quarters under his hospitable roof. In the evening, on reaching Namin, we met the messenger, who told us that Sultan Achmed Khan would consider it an honour to receive us. We dismounted in front of a large but unpretentious house within the village, the name of which, curiously enough, is very conspicuous on every map, although the place itself is but a hamlet. We ascended the steps, which, like all flights of steps in Persia, were ridiculously high and steep, and we entered into the room prepared for us. We had, in accordance with Eastern etiquette, previously divested ourselves of our boots. This custom is much to be commended, but it is not so easy of accomplishment to Europeans as to Orientals, who wear slippers over their thick bright-coloured woollen socks, and who manage to pick their way very cleverly through the deepest mud. Our room gave evidence that our host was striving after European civilisation, for it contained glass doors, an iron table, and some wire chairs. He proved himself to be a man of sense by providing at once for our bodily wants; immediately after our arrival some excellent tea was brought in, which served to reani-

mate our benumbed limbs, and it was announced to us that a warm supper would shortly follow. The visit, which we paid to our host in his own apartment, was a very short one, as it was Friday evening, and he was on the point of going to the mosque. A mullah, who sat crouching in a corner of the room, and who appeared to be reading the Koran, from time to time cast fiendish glances at us, scandalised that unbelievers should dare to desecrate the house on the sacred day. The supper soon made its appearance; it was entirely Persian as regarded the *menu*, but it was served in European style, in so far as there were plates, knives and forks, in the house—a luxury which in the case of a Persian, and especially of one living in the country, could hardly fail to create surprise. The *chef-d'œuvre* of Persian culinary art is the tschillaw, a white pyramid of steamed rice, which in excellency surpasses every European *plat de riz.* Each single grain of rice feels dry on the outside, whilst the interior contains the full juice. The mode of preparing the tschillaw, requiring a special aptitude, is described in Polak's work on Persia.[1] Whether a good tschillaw could be

[1] The receipt is as follows:—Let the rice remain 1 or 1½ hours in cold water, to get rid of the remains of the slime element, and then strain it through a sieve. Then fill a large copper pot half-full with salt and water, cover it with a tight-fitting vaulted cover. As soon as the water boils throw in quickly the rice; let it boil for eight or ten minutes and then taste. If the rice begins to swell, so that you can crush it between your fingers, pour out the water and let it get quite dry again. Now put butter in the pot, about ½ oz. to 1 lb. of rice; let it stew to a fine brown, pour a little water on it, and then strew the rice loosely over it. Now take the pot off the fire, put the cover on it, and close up the whole hermetically by means of a wet cloth or some clay.

prepared with our rice is a question; it seemed to me that the Persian rice was of much better quality than that which is sent to Europe. The bread was the lawasch, which is baked in the shape of thin pancakes several yards in length; the other dishes were ragouts of mutton prepared with plums, sour cream, and various spices. Our beverage consisted of a sweetish sherbet, imbibed by means of those well-known Persian ladles made of wood with neat filigree work. The absence of spirits was apologised for by the Persian *maître d'hôtel*, who explained that his master always carried the key of the spirit-cellar about with him, an assertion which the rosy hue of our host's nose fully corroborated. After supper beds were spread out for us on the carpet, and we speedily fell asleep, amidst the sounds of the prayers and the singing which reached us from the mosque opposite, needing no rocking after the fatigues of the day.

The next morning we dismissed our men from Astara; they were more than satisfied with what they received, and departed with loud expressions of thanks. The leave-taking with our host had much of the comical element. To appear as magnificent as possible, and to give us a high notion of his European culture, he had donned a Russian fancy uniform, with general's epaulets, instead of the Persian shawl-dress which he wore on the previous evening; but the yellow trowsers,

In this condition place the pot on glowing coals (some of which are usually placed on the cover), and let it remain there for 1 or 1½ hours, until the rice has been sufficiently done in the steam.

with the red lace and stockings of Persian texture, did not harmonise very well with the Muscovite uniform. His nose was adorned by a huge pair of blue spectacles, which imparted to the face a learned and at the same time a comical expression. His uniform, as also his title of *Seif-el-Mülk* (Sword of the Empire), which had been given to him by the Shah, led me to suppose that he occupied a high military rank; this, however, he denied, and added that he had donned the uniform solely in honour of us. This delicate attention necessitated a few compliments on our part about his house and about the kind reception which we had received at his hands; and our farewell conversation was bestrewed with many flowery phrases. A few questions were also brought in respecting the late war. After the kilian, the Persian nargileh with straight stem, had made the round for the third time, which is always the signal for departure, we took our leave. Our host had provided horses, and also a guard of honour to escort us.

The fourteen miles of road between Namin and Ardebil led across a monotonous, yellowish-brown high plain, scantily dotted over with miserable villages, the clay huts of which could scarcely be distinguished from the ground. The country must have known more prosperous times in former ages, for we stumbled across a multitude of old stone bridges, close to which the streams had here and there furrowed out a new bed, leaving the structure to rest on dry ground. The country does not seem to stand in need of irrigation, for the Savalandagh, with its crown of perpetual snow,

feeds the streams even in summer. The cone was still enveloped in clouds, and only the base, thirty-seven miles in diameter, was visible. According to Ali, the Turkish tribe of the Schachsewan roves about in this neighbourhood and as far as the Russian portion of the Mughan steppe. The people belonging to this tribe are reputed to be robbers and thieves, and are greatly feared by the country population. We only came across a few of them, who were very ragged, and who chiefly attracted our attention by a beautiful shaggy greyhound of a golden colour which they had with them. Besides the chronic apprehension of robbers Ali had another trouble to-day. The servants of our late host had called him an Armenian in disguise, from his luxuriant head of hair—it being contrary to the custom of the Moslems to wear flowing locks—and Ali had not been able to get over this affront.

We made our entry into Ardebil amidst the universal joy of the population. The people seemed never to have seen a European before, for everyone left the bazaar and pressed curiously around us. Followed by a swarm of several hundred people, we dismounted before the house of the Russian tapirbaschi, Sultanoff, a Grusinian. The post of a tapirbaschi comprises the supervision of local merchants, whether Russian subjects or placed under Russian protection, combined with the functions of a consular agent in respect to the Persian authorities. Russian subjects, chiefly Armenians and Tartars from Transcaucasia, dwell in such great numbers in Northern Persia that almost each

town possesses its Russian tapirbaschi. Our tapirbaschi was away travelling, and his *locum tenens*, Minas Bey, an Armenian, received us in his stead. News of our arrival spread through the town with the rapidity of the wind, and within an hour the house was filled with Russian subjects and Russian *protégés*, who came to wait upon us. We received in audience a deputation from their number, and listened to very interesting accounts which they gave us. Their contempt for the Shah and the entire Persian Government exceeded all bounds; and, relying on the ever-efficacious Russian protection, they indulged in the most scandalous and abusive opinions concerning the sovereign, and related many startling things. We devoted the afternoon to a walk through the bazaar and in the environs of the town. The bazaar was so full of life and animation, and so extensive, that I felt inclined to estimate the population of the town—amounting, according to Ritter (1843), to 4,000 souls—at 20,000 souls. The articles on sale seemed to us to be absurdly cheap; for instance, a short sheep's-skin jacket (without lining) cost 4 qrans; a fur cap 1 qran, a pair of common leather shoes 1½ qrans—the qran being worth about tenpence. No tapestry was to be seen; but in the coppersmiths' department some pretty cans and dishes were being manufactured after excellent ancient models. In other parts of Persia tasteless imitations of European designs are rapidly gaining the upper hand. The copper from which these articles are made comes, as far as I could learn, from mines situated north-west of

Ardebil, in the district of Karadagh. This metal must be very cheap, for the retail price of the manufactured article scarcely exceeds the value of copper according to the European standard. The proximity of the town to the sea, and to the high road leading from Tabreez to Astara, renders Ardebil the emporium of Russian goods for the eastern portion of the province of Azerbijaun. The situation of the town is not pleasing; with the exception of a few willow-trees, which adorn the banks of the tiny river Balyklysu, there is no trace over an area of many miles of either trees or bushes. The river, flowing through the barren plain, winds slowly round the eastern base of the Sevalandagh, and then discharges itself into the Arax. In front of the town is a sorry specimen of a fort, half European, half Persian. It was built by French engineers at the beginning of this century, captured in 1828 by Paskiewitsch, and since that period it has been abandoned and left to decay. The whole of the beggar corporation of the town seemed to have taken up its abode there, and the example of this mendicant element proved so contagious that even a kind of sentry who guarded the principal entrance-gate could not resist from stretching out his hand toward us in an attitude of supplication. The other entrances to the fort were without sentries; they simply consisted of gaps in places where the wall had fallen in.

After the hardships of the last few days we felt inclined to grant ourselves a day's rest, especially as the tscherwadar whom we engaged for the ride to

Tabreez was not quite ready with his preparations for the journey. We expressed the wish to our host to view the most remarkable sight in Ardebil—the mausoleum of Sheik Sefi, a great saint, who died in 1334—and he caused inquiries to be made at the mullah. The first inquiry elicited the silly excuse that the keys had been mislaid, and we were told to come back in a few days; a further inquiry met with a similar evasion, and it required a third somewhat pressing requisition on the part of the tapirbaschi to induce the mullah to make up his mind to allow us to enter the sacred place. The mausoleum was well worthy of a visit. Through an intermediate court—in which, being holy ground, the bodies of many reposed—we entered into the actual courtyard of the mosque, which in spite of the gnawing tooth of time still presents imposing and magnificent remnants of the original decoration. The art of decorating large surfaces with variegated glazed ornaments was in high bloom in Persia in the Middle Ages; the deep ultramarine blue ground tones with white half-raised inscriptions claim especial notice, and are of wonderfully beautiful effect. The most famous edifices of this class in Persia are now mere ruins, as, for instance, the blue mosque at Tabreez; but there are still magnificent specimens of this style of ornamentation in the holy places of the Shee-ites in Mesopotamia, at Meschhed Ali, Kerbela, Kazem near Bagdad, and at Imam-es-Samera. The interior of the mausoleum, into which we penetrated, presented much that was remarkable. The floor was

strewed over with carpets of great antiquity, upon which rested large bronze urns, strangely formed; in the background, behind a gilt railing, was the sarcophagus of Sheik Sefi, covered over with precious tapestry; and in a lateral chapel was the catafalque of another saint, Sheik Ismael, which was a masterpiece of mosaic work, being composed of wood, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and gold. The celebrated library of Sheik Sefi no longer exists; after the capture of the town it was sent to St. Petersburg by Paskiewitsch and incorporated into the Imperial Library. The mausoleum of Sheik Sefi possesses a treasure quite unrivalled. This is a collection of old Chinese and Persian porcelain, offerings from Persian rulers, displayed over the floor of a large vaulted hall, which from its unique character is perhaps of incalculable value. These offerings, amongst which are huge dishes and bowls, are so numerous that, in order to find accommodation for them in the hall, they have been piled up one above the other in small heaps. Even if the total amount of these pieces be estimated at 2,000, that figure would, perhaps, still be below the margin. Owing to want of care a great many of them have unfortunately been cracked or otherwise injured, and each individual piece lies buried beneath an inch of dust. It would have been a great gain to the world at large, and to art in particular, if Paskiewitsch had equally sent this collection to St. Petersburg. When we took leave of the mullah, and after Ali had given him in our name a golden token of gratitude, the priest hinted very

humbly that Paskiewitsch on his visit to the shrine had left behind eighty tumans, and that he could hardly expect less from us. We told him to look forward to better times.

In our wanderings through the town we came upon another mosque, also a ruin, but which must have been very beautiful in its day. There are a great number of baths in the town, and the sign which distinguishes those establishments is very comical; it consists in a grotesque fresco placed above the door, representing the Persian national hero Rustem cutting a red devil in twain with a sword. What the connection between this incident and a bath-room could be remains a mystery to me. Baths in Persia stand far behind those of Turkey as regards internal accommodation. Fortunately for ourselves we did not get acquainted with a peculiar inconvenience of Ardebil; it is the poisonous bug from Mianeh, which flourishes here. The bite of this insect, although not deadly, as the fable has it, is painful and troublesome to the European; the native, who from his earliest youth has been plagued with this pest, suffers less. We did not, however, get through the night without experiencing other unpleasantnesses. The night being cold, our room had been provided with the customary pan of live fuel, and we had been imprudent enough to forget to remove it from the room before going to sleep; the consequences were violent headaches and general debility the next morning, which only went off after we had been out some time in the open air.

The customary method of travelling in Persia is to engage a tscherwadar. These people keep at hand all the requisite apparatus, viz., saddles and horses to carry baggage, mules, and attendants, and are prepared to enter into arrangements for forwarding travellers to fixed distances, generally at fixed prices; the average charge per day for one horse seems to vary from two to three qrans, exclusive of *pour-boire* for the men accompanying the horses. As a rule tscherwadars stand in very evil repute, both as regards honesty and other qualifications; and I have had myself, at Tabreez, to undergo rather unpleasant experiences with the tscherwadar Mahmoud, well known to the European colony, and who had been recommended to me as the paragon of tscherwadars. The tscherwadar differs from the dragoman of Palestine and Syria, the duties of the former consisting merely in conducting the traveller safe to his destination; in other respects he is useless, for neither he nor those under him will put their hands to any menial service, the result of which is that travellers who do not wish to starve must provide themselves with servants and a cook. The tscherwadar is often most tyrannical. He starts when he pleases, without consulting the traveller whether it is convenient to start or not; he rouses the latter up at midnight, although the hour of starting has been fixed for 4 A.M.; he will not allow one single piece of baggage to be put on the horses until the last piece of bedding has been rolled up, and frequently leaves the traveller to stand tired and shivering in the courtyard

until he and his subordinates are graciously pleased to complete their duties. These incidents amuse the traveller at first, but end by being extremely vexatious, especially on long journeys, and it requires much equanimity to undergo this ordeal. Of course the tscherwadar shares with his countrymen the propensity for lying and deceiving; he is further credited with a quality not characteristic of his countrymen—rudeness. The horses provided by the tscherwadars are generally strong, hardy animals, good-tempered and easy to ride; the baggage-horses will carry two hundredweight or more. Mules are considered the best beasts of burden, but I have seldom seen them in caravans. The baggage is made to balance as nearly as possible on both sides of the saddle, a huge machine stuffed with straw, almost entirely covering up the whole of the horse's back. Our servants always packed slowly, but so securely that no portion of the baggage ever slipped out of its place or tumbled off; we were, however, always obliged to satisfy ourselves before starting that no article of baggage had been left behind. It was quite a treat to see how well these servants attended to their horses; whatever may have been the length of the day's journey, and however tired they may have been—for they always walked on foot by the side of the horses—yet they never went to sleep until the animals had been thoroughly cleaned. Nor did the horses suffer from want of food; for notwithstanding many a hard day's work they looked sleek and well-fed. The day's journey generally begins a few hours before sunrise, and lasts

until midday; in summer many persons travel through the night. The distance accomplished each day amounts, as in Xenophon's time, to five or six farsacks; but the farsack (called aghatsch in those portions of the country where Turkish is the language spoken) merely implies a standard of twenty-four stages, and is rather an elastic expression as regards distance; I have met with farsacks of three and one-third miles, and others of seven miles, but the average is about five miles. A Persian has no correct notion of distance; he simply knows that caravans perform journeys from one place to the other, and he therefore makes out the distance between the two places at a calculation of six farsacks per day—six farsacks being the usual day's journey for a caravan. Distances are performed without any intervals for rest; and as horses proceed rapidly (no other pace being tolerated), twenty-eight miles of road are easily got over in eight hours. Every fourth or fifth day a day of rest intervenes, and thus the average distance for one day amounts to about twenty-four miles.

The tscherwadar whom we had engaged, with eight horses, as far as Tabreez was so far an exception to the rule that he was neither rude nor thwarted our wishes as regarded the time of starting, nor did he try to cheat us. He did not err by excess of punctuality, for the first day his preparations for the start were not completed until 10 A.M. Accompanied by Minas Bey and his golam (office messenger), we rode out of Ardebil; besides these two an individual joined us laden with all kinds of implements of murder, and presenting

a most warlike appearance. His gun carried a double bayonet, shaped like a prong, the meaning of which at first was not quite clear to me; it turned out later on to be a moveable fork to rest the gun upon, for Persian firearms are so primitive and clumsy that to shoot from the shoulder is quite out of the question. It soon came out that this individual was not there for the purpose of escorting us, but solely with a view to provide for his own safety; for, notwithstanding the formidable arsenal which he carried about with him, events proved him to be a miserable coward. Our road ascended along the monotonous valley of the Balyklysu. After an hour's ride Minas Bey took leave of us, and in the course of the afternoon we reached the little village of Nèr (the Nijar of Kiepert's map). On approaching the village one of the inhabitants came out to offer us his house as night-quarters; we found a small but very neat room, the floor of which was covered with straw mats. The drawback of the house consisted in a dog, who looked upon us as intruders and attacked us each time that we left the room.

We continued our journey the next morning, having first performed our ablutions at the well, before the whole village population, which looked on devoutly. To-day we had to cross the watershed between the Balyklysu and the Adshytschai. The offshoot of the Savalandagh, which divides the two valleys, and consequently the basin of the Caspian Sea from that of Lake Urûmîâ, is rather low, and the incline is moderate. On the western side the descent, as far as a large

village rich in gardens, was pretty steep. We had still to overcome a second mountain projection before coming in sight of the wide plain of Serab. The view from this latter height was very picturesque. Beneath our feet extended a wide valley, bounded to the south by steep, lofty mountains, and apparently well irrigated and in most parts well cultivated; and northward, to our right, gradually faded away in the distance the soft outlines of the offshoots of the Savalandagh and the mountains of the Karadagh. Nothing could be seen of Serab, and we almost despaired of ever getting there; for the six farsacks, which were said to be the distance, grew longer and longer, and had become twenty-seven miles before we reached the gardens at the entrance of the place. We were, besides, exposed on the road to a thorough downpour, threatening to drench our baggage, which had only just got dry from the effects of the rain between Temirchanschura and Lenkoran. The size of the gardens of Serab led us to expect a larger village; not only were they very extensive, but enclosed by high walls. The place itself was pleasant and extremely animated. It prides itself on possessing medicinal springs, which at times are said to be numerously resorted to by invalids, who either live at the caravansarai or in tents, and bathe in the springs, each according to his inclination, no bathing establishment existing. After looking about for some time we found shelter at the house of a descendant of the Prophet, with huge green turban and crooked nose, who, impelled by the prospect of a little

gain, was willing for the moment to disregard his personal sanctity. It is true our quarters only consisted of a portion of the stables, but they were clean, and the vicinity of the horses kept away vermin. Our supper was of a more abundant nature than had been the case for a long time. It is, no doubt, a very distressing circumstance that travelling in the East should render a man so alive to creature comforts; but it is an undeniable fact that the question of food occupies a far more prominent position in the mind than higher interests, and that, during a journey like ours, even those who possess a refined and poetical nature will cast rapacious glances at a fine fat sheep. Our repose was not destined to be unalloyed, for flocks of sheep belonging to our host were spending the night in front of the paneless window; and as the rain had given them all colds their continuous coughing formed a heartrending concert during the small hours.

The map, which had guided us hitherto pretty faithfully, now failed us altogether. We beheld mountains of which no mention was made, and accomplished distances which, according to the map, should have brought us to Tabreez; and we finally found ourselves, at the end of a long day's journey, full thirty-eight miles from that city. On starting from Serab we first followed the downward course of the Adshytschai, and crossed it several versts below the little town. Here we came upon a dreary salt steppe, and the only traces of a road were indicated by carcasses. The soil of the steppe, owing to the salt crystals, shone with innumer-

able colours like a field of snow, and crackled under the horses' feet. The monotony of the waste was interrupted by a wretched village, Kurdkendi; but a splendid view, which we enjoyed during the whole forenoon, redeemed the want of attractions on the road. For the first time during many weeks the sky was perfectly clear. Rising in front of us were the lofty Sahend mountains, with three cones crowned with perpetual snow, and behind us glittered the peak of the Savalandagh, which hitherto had been enveloped in clouds. We felt surprised at its everyday kind of appearance; for, in the case of a mountain equalling Mont Blanc in height, we had pictured to ourselves an imposing spectacle; instead of this we beheld a flat cone, more like a huge mound of earth, which rose up in soft but ugly outlines from its broad base to its snowy summit. The Sahend mountains displayed a contrast of abrupt declivities and colossal contours. We witnessed in the afternoon a curious phenomenon. Several thunder-clouds passed in succession over our heads; they were between 300 and 400 feet in width, but their length extended over a space of from fifteen to twenty miles; this latter interval was easily calculated, as we could see the clouds touching both sides of the mountain range which bounded the wide valley. The first of these clouds enveloped us in darkness; the last, however, emitted a violent hailstorm, but the most beautiful sunshine followed a few minutes afterwards. We looked round in amazement, and lo! the sun had entirely changed his position. But before we had time

to solve the mystery whether we had deviated or not from our course during the hailstorm, the true sun showed himself at a great distance from the mock sun, which we had seen first and taken for the original. The phenomenon lasted for about a quarter of an hour, when the mock sun gradually disappeared. Towards the evening our road brought us in the direction of the mountains lying on our left, and shortly afterwards we entered into a deep side-valley; this was the valley of the Udshan-tschai, which stream we had to cross before reaching the little village, Kalah, our quarters for the night. On arriving there we found the only habitable dwelling occupied by travelling merchants; but Ali was equal to the occasion, and, rushing into the house, at once gave such an overwhelming description of our boundless power and exalted rank that they preferred to 'clear out' with all possible despatch rather than come in contact with such dangerous folk. Here our armed companion with the arsenal at his back gave proof of his well-tried courage. When we proposed to him to ride on the next morning to Tabreez in order to announce our arrival, he refused pointblank to separate himself from the party, openly pleading his terror of robbers. Finally, he consented to ride on to Tabreez as soon as we reached the high road, probably considering that, as there was a fair amount of traffic from that point to the city, his valuable person would no longer be placed in jeopardy.

In order to reach Tabreez before nightfall we had to start before daybreak. We experienced some delay

owing to one of the baggage-horses having gone astray in the dark, and not having been found again for a long time. Just as day began to dawn heartrending cries pierced the air; we looked around, and witnessed a most comical scene. A violent fight had arisen between our tscherwadar and a mule-driver, through our man having taken an orange from the other man's bale of goods without paying for it. Blows administered by heavy knotted sticks fell about thick as hail. The servants of both parties assembled, yelling at the top of their voices, but took no active part in the conflict raging between their masters. Our friend of arsenal celebrity stood by with a drawn sword. The complete absence of arms on the side of the enemy had considerably increased his courage, and apparently he was only waiting for our arrival to commence, before our eyes, a violent onslaught upon the mule-driver. When the latter saw three Europeans coming up armed with guns he thought his last hour was approaching, and went down upon his knees begging for mercy. This was readily granted to him, and he departed with gladdened heart and without further mention of the orange. We had intended to have our breakfast at a large village called Arischtenâb, as our provisions were running scarce; but we could obtain nothing except bad lawasch, rancid butter, and wild honey. It required a famished stomach to derive much satisfaction from such scanty fare. At a short distance beyond the village we reached the small salt lake Tschibli (Kurugöl in the Russia five-verst map), and were amazed to

find the water literally covered with wild fowl; ducks of all kinds, and also a bird half duck, half goose, spotted black, yellow, and white. We shot some of these ducks, but on account of the swampy banks there was no way of getting them when they were shot; so we left off slaughtering them, and contented ourselves with firing our guns into the air, to make the mass of wild fowl rise up. Even when a portion only of them flew up the noise of their wings resounded like distant thunder; and when they settled down again it was like a rock falling into the water. Soon after passing the lake we recognised an old friend of the Caucasus: the Anglo-Indian Telegraph, with its neat iron poles; it seemed as if we had been removed, all of a sudden, to civilised Europe. The high road from Teheran to Tabreez, along which the telegraph runs, was most animated. We frequently fell in with caravans of camels, horses, and donkeys. Other caravans had halted, and the animals were grazing in all directions. Several spots on the mountain slopes were literally covered with camels, and I feel certain that in a distance of about eighteen miles we came upon not less than 2,000. We also noticed an innumerable amount of donkeys; they were mostly large, powerful beasts, and they possessed a remarkably canny look about them, in consequence of having their nostrils slit—whether for the sake of health or beauty I am unable to say. That even the high road claims its victims we had a convincing proof in the many skeletons and carcasses which strewed the way; at one spot, on the left

side of the road, was a donkey with its head cut off, and a young camel nearly dead lay close to it; we even saw, in a state of decomposition, the carcase of a horse lying, surrounded by living men and beasts, in one of the large cells of the caravansarai of Tschibli, a substantial stone building, dating from the time of Abbas the Great. Notwithstanding the abundant traffic, which opens up many sources of supply, the late famine had caused sad havoc in the country, especially in this neighbourhood; newly built cemeteries gave evidence of the multitude of victims. But the last harvest had been favourable, and the famine was soon forgotten; as to guarding against the recurrence of a similar calamity in the future, no one ever thinks of doing so in the East. We saw in the large village of Sejdabad the first sign of the vicinity of the city of Tabreez; this consisted in a coach of primeval shape, with the Persian arms (lion and sun) on the door, resting, abandoned, against the door of the post-station. The Persian heir-apparent had, it appeared, committed the imprudence of undertaking in this vehicle a journey from Tabreez to Teheran; but no sooner did the coach arrive at Sejdabat than it stuck fast in the mud, and the Prince was obliged to continue the route on horseback. It is more than probable that this coach will remain in its present position until the day of judgment, unless the post-master prefers to convert it into fuel. Sejdabat is the place where travellers of distinction generally change their garments, in order to enter Tabreez clean and smart, and this etiquette

the travelling Persian never fails to observe. After leaving Sejdabat we crossed a mountain of inconsiderable height, and reached the pleasant valley of Basmindsh; we expected soon to arrive at the city, but the road still continued along the mountain-slope, and the sun was just setting when, winding round a projection, we beheld lying before us the countless houses and gardens of Tabreez. Our intrepid Asiatic friend had faithfully fulfilled his mission: our message had reached the right address, and we found awaiting us at the gateway of the city one of the partners of the Swiss firm to which we had been recommended. We had still four miles to ride through crowded streets and lanes before dismounting at the threshold of the hospitable house which was to be our home for the next eight days.

The reception which we met with at the hands of Herr Würth, representing the firm Ziegler & Co., of Manchester, was a hearty and cordial one, and the pleasure of finding ourselves in the bosom of a family of countrymen after months of wandering amongst half-savage tribes compensated us for many a hardship and trouble. The sound of the mother-tongue, which expresses itself so sweetly, and seems like music to the ear, removes, as it were, the harassing state of ostracism which the forced use of a foreign language, and still more of an interpreter, has implanted in the mind and heart of the traveller. Our host had for years inhabited Persia, and both he and his wife had become so naturalised in the country that the Turkish language

was almost as much spoken in the house as the mother-tongue. It is well nigh impossible for any German to pass through Tabreez without becoming acquainted with that hospitable house. We arrived just about dinner-time, and greatly enjoyed the good old German fare, spiced with Persian wine. The latter beverage is pressed by Europeans from the excellent Tabreez grapes, and with its slightly fiery taste resembles the Marsala of Sicily, and not the Marsala of Germany or England. Since wine ready for drinking cannot be purchased at Tabreez, each family is left to provide for its own wants, and a period sets in almost every year, about autumn, when the old wine begins to fail and the new wine is not yet in the market—a moment of ill-omen, for recourse must then be had to water, which here is always an unwholesome drink for Europeans. Another delicacy which we met with again after a long interval was our native potato; this plant has been introduced in this neighbourhood, as well as in other districts of the East (Mossoul, Bagdad, &c.), by Englishmen, and it thrives admirably. To a European who has not tasted this vegetable for a long period no greater delicacy can be offered. The whole of the European colony during the course of the evening assembled in the house to greet our arrival; and although we had been on the move since 4 A.M. we contrived to hold out bravely till past midnight. Fireworks were fired off from the roof; but from the carelessness displayed in the proceeding we might have fancied Tabreez to consist of stone and iron instead of

being constructed of timber and clay. The servants held the rockets in their hands, and simply ignited them with a match, without further preliminary; it was quite a matter of indifference whether the rocket went up straight into the air or burst in a horizontal direction. Fireworks constitute as a rule a favourite amusement in Persia. We saw Bengal lights and different pyrotechnical eccentricities ascending at the same time from other roofs in the town. The further proceedings of the evening were of a very merry description, and the whole wound up by a vocal entertainment. Some Greek national songs, with which we were favoured by some gentlemen of that nationality who were amongst the company, left a comical impression upon our minds. Greece, strictly speaking, up to the time of her emancipation did not possess a repertory of national songs, and was compelled to lay in a stock of that article, so essential to the dignity of a free people. Although the Hellenes possess, it is true, a very flexible language, they are unfortunately destitute of any defined collection of melodies. They therefore composed the poetry themselves, and borrowed the greater part of the tunes from the songs of the German students. Thus, for instance, we listened to that bloodthirsty ditty, '*Τὸν Τούρκον τὸν νὰ σφάξομεν*,' enlivened by the strains of 'Bemoostter Bursche ziehe ich aus.' This lyric composition was not directed offensively at the Turkish Consul-General, who was present and fully enjoyed himself.

At the time of our visit the European population

of Tabreez consisted of twenty-two grown-up male members, the one half of which number belonged to the *personnel* of the different Consulates, and the other half to the merchant community. England, Russia, and Turkey have appointed Consuls-General at Tabreez, on account of the important commercial and political interests. France has a Consul, whose chief duties seem to consist in supporting the Catholic missionaries at Lake Urûmia in their perpetual bickerings with their American rivals and colleagues, who are under English protection. For a time Belgium indulged in the luxury of a Consulate at Tabreez. The most influential representatives of European trade are the firm Ziegler & Co., whose agent had received us, and a Greek firm; there is also an important Russian Transport Company. In general there exists in the European colonies of the East, which are more or less removed from the civilised world, nearly as many different sets as there are members composing them. The state of affairs was more pacific at Tabreez; for although many individuals would have no intercourse with their neighbours, yet there were no clearly defined hostile camps. The Turkish Consul-General, a jovial *bon-vivant*, who was credited with much intelligence, and, above all, with much *savoir-faire*—a quality which in Persia takes precedence of intelligence—was the 'friend all round,' and without an enemy either amongst Europeans or Persians. Neither was he a fanatical Moslem, and he could fully appreciate a good glass of wine. The representatives at Tabreez of Russia and of England

enjoy a position of authority in accordance with the power of their respective countries. The whole of the European colony live together in the same quarter, and it possesses, besides other privileges, the advantage of a guard of honour, supplied by the Persian garrison. But even this distinction has its drawbacks, for the colonel of the regiment, driven to the following logical deduction, 'Cujus commodum, ejus et incommodum,' or *Anglicè*, 'One man's meat is another man's poison,' leaves to the Europeans the task of remunerating the soldiers, whilst he pockets the pay supplied by the Government; or, I should perhaps say, in Persian phraseology, 'eats it.' As a rule everything is 'eaten' in Persia: honour, fame, money, and the bastinado. On one occasion, when our host and myself were passing before the guard-house, the sentry omitted to perform the necessary salute, and when asked why he did not present arms he replied, 'We have had no pay to-day.' The European colony, especially on Sundays, have a habit of walking in procession; and, according to the custom of the place, the guard of honour, armed with sticks, marches in front, whilst the Europeans follow behind at a solemn funereal pace. On these fête days the Persian soldiery disports itself in full splendour. The dress consists of the cast-off uniforms of European armies, which contractors buy up, presumably for next to nothing, charging the Shah the full price of new habiliments; of ragged pantaloons, of a peasant's fur cap, and of an utter absence of *chaussure*. The weapons consist of matchlocks, which at the best are

VILLA OF THE PERSIAN HEIR-APPARENT AT TABREEZ.

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only good enough to be used as clubs. Amongst the heroes who walked in front of us one wore an old Sepoy uniform, another was attired in a Zouave jacket, and the rest were clad in apparel so worn and faded that the origin of no one garment could be traced with any approach to certainty.

In the course of one of these processions we came to the villa of the Persian Heir-apparent, which is generally occupied by his Highness for some months during summer. The Prince is Governor of the province of Azerbijaun, but had been recalled to Teheran, where he was to be initiated in the mysteries of Imperial administration, in view of his father's prospective journey to Europe. His Highness's villa is approached through extensive courtyards, and is situated in the midst of a large garden—if a space may be so called in which fruit-trees, planted in rows, are left to grow wild. A small artificial pond in front of the villa, and a canoe which looks weary of existence, and is certainly dangerous to life, bears testimony to the favourite pastime of the owner—a row on the water. A kind of menagerie behind the villa provides for scientific recreation; it consists of two large cages, one of which contains partridges, and the other rabbits; the *chef de cuisine* to the Prince is not improbably the director of the Zoological Gardens. The villa itself is a pleasing structure, in a somewhat crumbling condition, with a pavilion crowned by a cupola, which is reached by a steep, breakneck kind of staircase. The halls are decorated in the Persian style, and contain fresoes by

a Persian painter, who had studied the works of European masters. These compositions appear ridiculous at first sight, but on closer examination they give proof of no inconsiderable talent for art; and indeed in this respect the Persians only lack perseverance and a logical mind. A Napoleon I., for instance, represented by this Tabreez artist, possessed greater merit than many similar productions which I have seen at Versailles.

Another Sunday's walk brought the whole European colony to the Castle, where tea was taken. That lofty structure dates from the Middle Ages, and is now a ruin. We were told that it had originally been intended for a mosque, an assertion which accords ill with the mighty walls. The latter attain a height of 120 feet, and a thickness of about 25 feet at the base. In those portions of the building which have been spared by the hand of time these walls, which have no buttresses, and which are solely constructed of bricks, produce a very imposing impression by their size. The view from above was magnificent, and from our position on the Castle, which is in the centre of the city, we overlooked the entire panorama of Tabreez. The Castle has been rendered famous by an historical event and by a miracle. The first of these two occurrences is the military execution which took place in 1848 within its walls, when the prophet Bâb, who wished to reform Islamism, and who nearly succeeded in driving the Kadshar dynasty from the throne, was shot dead. The second occurrence was that of a woman, who, in ac-

cordance with the judge's verdict, was condemned to be thrown from the top of the fortress. No sooner was she hurled into open space than her dress kept her floating in the air and she was softly wafted into the gardens of a house opposite. Should the story be true, the assertion of the judge that she was '*une femme légère*' would rest upon truth. The Arsenal is contained in the courtyard of the Castle, and the contents enjoy the special superintendence of the heir to the throne. The Prince is said to know something about guns and rifles, and to possess a collection of the latest improved firearms, and, like his father, to be by no means an indifferent shot. However, he is not credited with any further knowledge; and as regards the administration of the province of Azerbijaun, which has been confided to his care, he does not trouble himself in the matter, but leaves to his companions the task of ruling over and plundering it. The guns which I saw in the Arsenal were old rubbish of former centuries, and so ponderous, that—considering the absence of roads in Persia—any attempt to manœuvre these instruments of warfare could not seriously be contemplated. The only representative of modern weapons consisted of a drawn battery with conical grooves. If the remaining arsenals of the country are not better provided than this one, and the soldiers do not present a more martial appearance than those whom we saw, there may be some truth in the following assertion of a Russian officer: 'Persia,' he said, 'can be conquered with a single company, without firing a shot; with a battalion it would be

more difficult, and with a whole regiment it would be impossible, for the entire force would perish with hunger.'

The city extended around the Castle in a wide circle. An inner wall in a state of decay encloses those portions of the city which are situated around the Castle, whilst an outer wall in a somewhat better condition encircles the entire radius. The area of the city cannot be much less than that of St. Petersburg or of Moscow, although the population is only estimated at 100,000 souls (a census is unknown in the East), for within the outer walls there are extensive inner walls and waste spaces. The mass of verdure, seldom to be met with to so great an extent in Persia, imparts a cheerful aspect to the city, which besides is beautifully situated. As viewed from the Castle or from the house of our host Tabreez resembles an oasis in the midst of a great mountain-wilderness. To the south are the snow-covered crests of the Sahend mountains, to the north-east is a splendid dark wall of rocks, whilst to the west the view extends over a wide, well-cultivated plain as far as the jagged summit of the peninsula of Shahi, Lake Urûmia. Notwithstanding the beautifully clear weather we were unable to distinguish the surface of the lake. The elevated position of the city—4,944 feet above the level of the sea—renders the climate for the most part healthy; but even here the heat is so great in summer that all those who are not detained in Tabreez by business and who can afford a summer retreat take refuge in the cool valleys of the Sahend mountains, near Sejdakad and other villages. The

PERSIAN BEGGARS.

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Europeans, too, during the hot months pitch their tents in the mountain regions.[1] The interior of the city resembles that of all Persian cities—narrow, tortuous, unpaved lanes, flanked by the backs of houses, so that the traveller always finds himself between two dirty clay walls. As one street precisely resembles the other, and as the constant windings impede the view, a stranger soon loses his way. The same thing happened to me in the short distance between the bazaar and the house of our host, and I had not the slightest notion where I was. A beggar, whom I had noticed several times, and who knew me by sight, put me on the right track again. Beggars are numerous at Tabreez, but I never found them importunate. The misery incurred during the last famine appears to have been fearful. I was struck by the small number of dogs in the street, for Eastern towns generally swarm with them. The famine has probably made a great clearance amongst them. Another drawback of the streets consists in the innumerable holes occasioned by the water-conduits; by taking due precautions it is possible to avoid them in the daytime, but at night we had to walk behind a servant carrying a lantern if we wished to preserve our limbs intact. Walking about the

[1] The name Tabreez means Teb-reez, fever-expelling. This epithet is said to have been given to the city during the Middle Ages on account of its healthy situation. The tribes which speak the Turco-Tartar dialect, called Azerbijaun, pronounce it 'Tabryz' or 'Tarbyz,' which probably accounts for the entirely false designation 'Tauris' used in Europe. The English spell it the most correctly, viz. 'Tabreez.'

streets without a lantern is forbidden by the police, and we were challenged by a sentry within a few steps of our door and very nearly arrested, because we were not provided with one.

Thieves have not, however, as yet suffered from police-regulations, for robberies and murders are not of uncommon occurrence; Europeans, however, are at any rate safe from open violence. The Persian lanterns (fanus) are very suitable for lighting the way; they consist of a huge cylinder-shaped globe of oiled linen, which doubles up and is closed at both ends by means of brass covers pierced through with little holes, the whole being generally of nice workmanship. These lanterns emit a soft but sufficiently bright light, without blinding the eye, as our lanterns do, and the strongest wind does not extinguish them. We had a striking incident before our own doors of how little the inhabitants or the police heed the condition of the streets. The proprietor of the ground situated opposite to us was constructing a new house for himself, and the masons without any hesitation simply dug the earth away from the street in order to make mortar. By the time the house is completed the ground will probably have regained its former level in consequence of heavy rains, or possibly from other circumstances.

The Blue Mosque still remains to be mentioned. This structure, formerly so famous, is now a complete ruin; there are only a few pillars left, and it is scarcely possible to recognise from the blue glazings still extant and the large transparent slabs of Meragha alabaster

which adorn the lower portions of the walls how beautiful the edifice must have been in former times. Yet the mosque was not spacious; it was about the size of an average village church. Whatever other mosques may exist in the city, they are easily overlooked, owing to the low elevation of the Persian minarets; and many mosques are without minarets.

The great importance of Tabreez must be sought for in its commercial position; being the largest city in Persia, it is not only the centre of an important local traffic, but, by its situation, has become the emporium of European trade with Persia. There are two commercial highways from Europe to Persia, the one by way of Trebizonde and Erzeroom, the other by way of Poti, Tiflis, and Erivan. The first road was formerly the most used, but in latter times it has had to yield to the competition of Tiflis, and soon will be entirely abandoned. The Russian Government manifests great anxiety to attract the traffic to its territories by keeping in good repair the Tiflis-Erivan road, and by lightening the custom dues on transit goods; whilst the Turkish Government, by imposing transit dues and fostering petty annoyances, has entirely destroyed its share in the trade. Commerce in Persia is, generally speaking, a hazardous undertaking, viz., large profits and large losses; no safe business can be carried on, owing to the proverbial dishonesty of Persians. Added to this a sharp competition is made against good European houses by Persian adventurers, who generally ply their game from Constantinople. In other

respects, too, the European merchant at Tabreez does not repose on a bed of roses. Postal and telegraphic communication—those two pioneers of trade—are in a sadly neglected state; and such is the nature of the Persian Post-office, that no house of commerce ever entrusts a letter to it, the whole of the correspondence being carried on through the couriers of embassies and consulates. As for the Persian telegraph system, it seems chiefly to be employed in the distortion and delaying of telegrams; and the Anglo-Indian telegraph, which passes through Tabreez, is unfortunately not allowed to transmit or receive any telegrams in Persia. Many years will probably still elapse before Tabreez possesses a railway. The project of a line from Tiflis *viâ* Erivan to the Persian frontier seems to me impracticable, as the cost of the line would prevent the railway from becoming remunerative. A good road would answer the same purpose, and not cost a tenth part of the money.

We spent a large portion of the day in the bazaar, the centre of animation in every Eastern town. To the European there is every day something new to see, but unfortunately in Tabreez there is a total absence of the numerous coffee-houses which abound in Turkey, and from which the traveller is able to look down in ease and comfort upon the stir and bustle beneath. Here the traveller can only mingle amongst the street crowd, and be pushed and pressed to and fro amongst the throng. The bazaar consists of rows of arched corridors, here and there interrupted by courtyards and

octagonal halls. As usual in the East, every trade has a separate quarter; that of the carpet merchants is more orderly, being frequented by a better kind of customer, but the crowd is immense before the stalls of the hardware traders; and the turmoil is fearful, in the morning, in the space allotted to the greengrocers and the fruiterers, whose bazaars, scattered over the whole town, simply have mats strung across the streets as a protection against the sun. The din in the coppersmiths' quarter, which is situated at the extreme end of the large bazaar, is deafening; and the hammering in the long corridors occupied by the boot-makers reminds the traveller of the noise of a steam factory. The Oriental is, as a rule, disposed to be indolent, but, if it suits him, he can work very hard for a short time; and I shall never forget four smiths at Tabreez, whom I saw hammering a red-hot piece of iron with a rapidity and strength such as I have never seen in Europe; the four hammers kept striking on the same place one after the other, and never touched one another.

The choice of wares in the bazaar was smaller than we expected. We were told that the late famine had caused sad havoc amongst beasts of burden, and that but few caravans had arrived from the interior of the country. However, the collection of goods which Messrs. Ziegler and Co. had prepared for the Vienna International Exhibition, and which were on the point of being forwarded to their destination, gave us an opportunity of becoming acquainted with Persian pro-

ducts of every kind and quality. Carpets ranked highest amongst the goods displayed. Those most sought after are the carpets of Ferahan, with their garlands of flowers worked in subdued tints, and with their green borders decorated with peculiar designs. Chorassan carpets, with their bright hues, are seldom met with, and have little value in Persia; but the carpets from Senneh in Kurdistan, with their delicate designs, often fetch fancy prices. There exists, besides, a large number of carpetlike textures, especially the cheap bright-coloured rugs of Kurdistan, and the warm, soft Persian felt carpets, with printed patterns. The wholesale price of Ferahan carpets of best quality at the time of our visit was twenty-eight qrans the square pik, or little more than eighteen shillings the square *mètre*, and these carpets will wear for an indefinite period. Other kinds of carpets fetch various prices according to their quality and rarity. The Kurdish rugs (about eighteen to twenty-four shillings a-piece) and the felt carpets were very cheap. Europeans buying carpets should take especial care that they are not deceived, for those which are woven irregularly are next to unsaleable in Persia, and it is no uncommon device for merchants to try to induce foreigners to purchase them. Strangers should also satisfy themselves that there are no tears in the carpets, as they are frequently damaged by being badly or too tightly packed. There were scarcely any shawls in the bazaar, as the caravans from Jezd and Kerman had not arrived; and there were only a few specimens of the shawl-kind of silk stuffs of

which we had seen an extensive selection at Tiflis. The other Persian products are more curious than beautiful or useful. Foreigners generally burden themselves with a load of things which, afterwards, they do not know what to do with, and which are only a hindrance on the journey. This is frequently the result of the dialogue which has always to be gone through between the foreign buyers and the Persian sellers, during which conversation the dellâl displays his ability in inducing the strangers to purchase. The dellâl is the inevitable medium of all bargains in Persia, and he always affords great amusement. Scarcely had we arrived in Tabreez when Meschhedi Sadyk made his appearance. He was a native of Ispahan, about ninety years of age, who, in spite of a long residence at Tabreez, and of constant intercourse with Europeans, could speak nothing but Persian; he came to request us to honour him with our valuable custom. I never saw such a perfect prototype of Shylock. Notwithstanding his great age, he would run about from morning to night displaying his curiosities and mock antiquities, and was as happy as a child when he succeeded in 'doing' some one. One day he found in our company another dellâl. He then pronounced a long discourse to the prejudice of wicked men who decoy and deceive innocent foreigners, and concluded by offering us some old arms and some pedlar's rubbish at a hundred times above their value. We asked him to give us his photograph, and he expressed himself quite willing to have it taken for our 'Honourable Excellencies;' but he de-

manded the modest sum of 100 tumans (over 80*l.*) for his face, considering it to be worth at least that to him.[1] And thus in the course of some days we purchased a collection of good and bad wares, taking the precaution, however, not to burden our baggage therewith. The whole cargo was forwarded *viâ* Tiflis to Europe, where it arrived safely some five months later.

Altogether time passed most agreeably. During the day we walked about the city and in the bazaar, the scene of ever varying pictures and new impressions, and the evening was spent at the houses of the hospitable European society, especially at the residence of the English Consul-General, once a much-talked-of hero of the Crimean War, who considered his present post a very civilised one after years of service at the Feejee Islands.[2] The English have the talent of always making themselves at home in the East, and this house was no exception to the rule; it even possessed a billiard-table, which had come all the way from England *viâ* Trebizonde, and which had been conveyed from that port to Tabreez on the backs of camels. But in the long run no home in foreign lands, however comfortable it may be, will satisfy the European, who pines for the mother country, with its manifold restraints, in spite of the freedom which Oriental life

[1] Meschhedi Sadyk seems to have come down in his pretensions, for, shortly after writing the above lines, I received through a friend in Tabreez a very successful photograph of the famous dellâl. The accompanying woodcut will serve to perpetuate his memory.

[2] Captain Henry Michael Jones, V.C., has recently been transferred to the post of Consul-General in Norway.—C. H.

OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

MESCHHEDI SADYK.

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affords, and which is very enjoyable to the new arrival. The lucky one who at last seizes the opportunity of returning home is the object of universal envy.

We had now to devote our attention to the further progress of our journey; provisions had to be purchased, information had to be obtained, and, above all, a tscherwadar had to be engaged. As regards the first point we received every practical advice and assistance from our amiable hostess, to whom we are deeply indebted; one invaluable present was a sack of potatoes, the greatest delicacy to the European in the East; neither were drinkables forgotten for the long journey to Assyria. Concerning the route to be taken we obtained full information as far as Souk-Bulak, in Kurdistan, with the positive assurance that Mossoul could be reached from there by some means or other. We gave up the idea of travelling *viâ* Wan, as we were unable to get reliable intelligence respecting the route from Wan to the Tigris. A tscherwadar was forthcoming in the person of Mahmoud, a Kurd, whose good qualities, especially his honesty, were extolled to the skies. Confiding in these statements, we omitted, much to our own detriment, to enter into a written agreement with him, and we engaged him for the journey to Souk-Bulah on his undertaking, in the presence of witnesses, to convey us to Mossoul, should we desire it, for a further consideration of thirty-two tumans. At last everything was ready for a start, and our departure was fixed for the following Wednesday, in which arrangement we displayed our ignorance of Oriental cus-

toms, for we should have known that Persians only very reluctantly commence a journey on a Wednesday, which is regarded as the unlucky day, and that the superstitious Kurd will not do so under any circumstances. As might readily have been foreseen, neither horses nor tscherwadar made their appearance on the Wednesday, and we had to give up another day's stay to the hospitable city; but this could scarcely be regarded in the light of a misfortune.

The accounts which were given to us at Tabreez concerning Persia were not of a cheering nature. The plague of the land is a bad Government, the plague of the Government is a bad people, and the plague of the people an unproductive soil, and from this vicious circle there is no escape. Since the death of Emir Mirza Taghi Khan, who with an iron hand had established order and tranquillity within the realm, and whom the Shah, jealous of his power, had put to death, the condition of things has grown worse and worse. Although in later times open rebellion has not arisen, still the state of the country is far from pacific; and any important occurrence—as, for instance, a new famine or a change on the throne—might occasion a serious revolution. The Shah is a zero written with a capital *O*, and the Heir-apparent is a zero written with a small *o*. The fuss made about the Shah during his visit to Europe is much to be regretted: this potentate will probably now imagine that the first anxiety of every ruler in Europe is to secure his invaluable alliance. Persia is not to be civilised by the introduction

of new uniforms and by a morsel of railway, and it may well be doubted whether the country can ever look forward to a better future so long as it is inhabited by Persians. At least, no instance is known in history of an Eastern people rising, like the phœnix, from its ashes. The population possesses neither the power of action nor the requisite perseverance for the task of regeneration. The short periods of glory which intervened under an Abbas or a Nadir Shah simply show the ability of the individual to raise himself above the level of his countrymen. At the death of leaders such as these everything falls back into a state of inactivity and decline.

When European newspapers discuss the subject of reform in Persia they display a want of knowledge of the true state of affairs. The Reuter plan of farming the whole of Persia was little more than a speculation which at the best could only endanger the purses of credulous Europeans. That this project would come to a speedy termination might easily have been foreseen. The agricultural condition of the country is most lamentable; a year without rain in one province inevitably brings famine in its wake, and the rich harvest of neighbouring provinces is no alleviation to so great a calamity, since there are no roads or means of transport. The peasantry is sorely oppressed, and thereby totally impoverished. Of what use to them to lay up a store of provisions, and thus become the prey of grasping officials? There is no industry, in the actual sense of the word, in Persia (the manufactory of carpets

being solely a domestic industry); and whenever a town exhibits signs of prosperity it speedily becomes the victim of official rapacity. The depravity of all classes of public functionaries is perfectly incredible, and a curious analogy thus exists between uncivilised Persia and over-civilised America. No one has ever better described the Persia of the present day than honest Olearius, who visited it in the seventeenth century as ambassador of a Duke of Holstein. He concludes his diary with the following sentence:—

Ich habe Persien in Persien gesucht,
Und habe meinen Weg wohl hundertmal verflucht.

I have sought Persia in Persia,
And have cursed the journey wellnigh a hundred times.

TURKEY IN ASIA.

CHAPTER VI.

TABREEZ TO BAGDAD.

Journey to Lake Urûmia—Serderud—Goigân—The Chaldeans—Marble Quarries—Chanian—Binab—Tschillik—Souk-Bulak—Kurds—Visit to the Khan—Hunting-expedition—Routes leading into Turkey—Our Pilgrim—Paschy—Lahidshân—Rajât—Robbery and Theft—Valley of the Rewanduz-tschai—Dergala—Rewanduz—Kurdish population—Audience of the Kaimakam—Adventure—Koniatman—Arrival in Assyria—Kurdish Chief—Passage of the Great Zab—Battle-field of Gaugamela—Duserreh—Tezcharab—Mossoul—Ruins of Nineveh—Kouyunjik—Khorsabad—Our Kellek—Journey down the Tigris—Nimroud—Machines for raising water—Kalah Shergat—Tekrit—Sâmera—Forests of Palm-trees—Kazem—Arrival at Bagdad.

On October 31 our horses made their appearance at mid-day, led by two sturdy Kurds. We sent the baggage on in advance, and took a hearty leave of our kind host. The same gentleman who received us at the gates of Tabreez on the occasion of our arrival also accompanied us out of the city. We had another opportunity of riding through the suburbs, which extend in every direction, and finally reached the open fields. A sharp gallop across country soon brought us to our tscherwadar on the road to Binab. The gentleman who had accompanied us now took his leave, and we were once

more entirely amongst Asiatics. An old Armenian and his son, who had joined the tscherwadar on the way, spoke a little French, and thus enabled us to carry on conversation. They were not, on the whole, very pleasant companions. The father was a cross old man, who was proceeding to his estates at Sulduz, a tract of land south-west of Lake Urûmia—most probably to squeeze money out of his people there—and his son, a youth of about twenty years of age, much to be pitied, who—a circumstance quite incredible in the East—was mounted on a horse for the first time in his life, and seemed by no means at his ease; his European town-dress, besides, was the most uncomfortable costume imaginable for such a journey. Our arrival was the beginning of new trials for him. As soon as the father saw that we were carrying our guns ourselves he immediately ordered his son to sling on his shoulders a rusty double-barrelled musket, which the latter had most wisely entrusted to the care of a servant; and the poor victim looked inexpressively sad and depressed. Besides the two Armenians we were joined by all manner of folk anxious to avail themselves of this opportunity of safe travelling. They were not precisely in our way, but we could very well have dispensed with their presence. A Mecca pilgrim, mounted on a lively little donkey, formed an exception—he proved later on to be a very useful companion.

The road itself presented little variety, although we had some fine views of the jagged summits of the peninsula of Shahi, at Lake Urûmia, the waters of

which were not as yet visible. To our left we perceived the snow-crowned peaks of the Sahend mountains, and in the background the lofty mountain-chains of Kurdistan. At noon we reached the large caravansarai of Serderud, a large and airy structure, which Persia owes to a Mr. Isaac Grünfeld, from Galicia. A few days later on we made that gentleman's acquaintance. We had no inclination to take up our night quarters at so early a period of the day, but nothing could be seen of the tscherwadar, who had fallen behind; and his servants obstinately refused to conduct us any farther against their instructions. We finally gave in and took possession of a little room destitute of furniture and possessing windows without panes, through which the wind whistled merrily. We had ample leisure, during the afternoon, thoroughly to visit the caravansarai. The stables were roomy, but of such slight construction that at each step on the flat roof—the universal promenade in the East—we fancied that we were going to fall through. The sight of the large courtyard was most picturesque in the evening, when crowded with camels and other animals. The camels were cramped up together in a circle around their drivers, waiting with outstretched necks to receive their supper; this consisted of a huge flour dumpling, which was pushed down their throats, and which slowly and perceptibly worked its way down into their stomachs. Amongst them was a crowd of men, horses, and donkeys—a bright and animated scene, lit up by the evening sky and the camp-fire. Eventually

our tscherwadar, Mahmoud, with his long red beard, put in an appearance. He received with much composure our reproaches at his unpunctuality, and his countenance seemed to say: 'Only wait a little: you will see worse than that;' and so we did. At midnight, after scarcely four hours' sleep, we were woke up with a frightful noise by the old Armenian, who said that the tscherwadar wanted to start. We angrily packed up our things and went into the courtyard. But here no tscherwadar was to be seen, nor even any of his servants. When finally the tscherwadar was aroused he coolly declared that he had never intended to start before daybreak, and we were left standing, cold and sleepy, for two hours in the courtyard. Our feelings towards the Armenian who had disturbed our night's rest are more easily imagined than expressed.

We were compensated for the icy cold morning by a magnificent sunrise, rich in varied tints; and this was only a feeble prelude to the wonderful spectacles which we beheld later on at Mossoul and at Bagdad. The route continued along the offshoots of the Sahend, and was very lively; numerous caravans, partly laden with the beautiful carpets from the district of Ferahan, passed us on the way, and the large caravansarais on both sides of the road also bore testimony to the extensive traffic. Gradually the vicinity of Lake Urûmia became manifest. As there is no exit for the waters the level is subject to constant fluctuations, and during wet seasons the flat banks are transformed into impenetrable swamps. But, thanks to the dry autumn

weather, we were able to leave the stony road running along the border of the mountain and to make a short cut by riding across the plain; only here and there a swampy pool reminded us that this tract of country is disputed by both lake and dry land. Our day's journey was not a very long one, and we reached the caravansarai of the large village of Goigân some time before the afternoon sun had threatened to render further riding unpleasant. Here we found a small but tolerably comfortable little room. The neighbourhood is intersected by well-fed streams flowing down from the Sahend, and it presents a very pleasant aspect. We perceived large and, apparently, prosperous villages, hidden amongst the verdure of extensive orchards, and surrounded by well-cultivated fields. Fruit of excellent quality existed in abundance. The surface of the lake was still invisible; and in order to convince ourselves that there was a Lake Urûmia elsewhere than in the maps we ascended in the afternoon a mound situated in front of the village, and covered with tombs. The view richly rewarded us for our trouble: the blooming landscape, extending beneath our feet as far as the little town of Dehkargan, was only to be compared with that of Lombardy, had it not lacked the white church-spires of the latter country; and glittering in the last rays of the setting sun lay before us Lake Urûmia, at a distance of about four miles; its northern extremity was concealed from sight by the peninsula of Shahî, whilst to the south the waters lost themselves beneath the blue horizon. In front of us rose

up like stupendous walls the mountains of Kurdistan and of the Chaldean country, a region but little known. The Chaldeans who inhabit the mountain-slopes facing the lake are subject to Persia, and are said to be in a flourishing condition, thanks to a fertile soil abundantly irrigated from the surrounding mountains. Beyond the Turkish frontier extends a rugged mountain district forming the basin of the sources of the Great Zab, and inhabited by wild tribes, which even now are only nominally subjected to Turkish rule. The Chaldean population is Christian as well on Turkish as on Persian territory, and is described, though erroneously, as a Nestorian sect; hence the Chaldeans are generally designated as Nestorians, especially in Persia. Besides the French and American missions on Persian territory there is also another mission at Mossoul, composed of French Dominicans, who labour amongst the Chaldeans dwelling upon Turkish soil. There has been much controversy concerning the origin of the Chaldean tribe; some trace its origin to the Ten Tribes of Israel which disappeared after the Babylonian captivity, whilst others regard this people as descendants of the ancient Assyrians.

On our return at dusk to the caravansarai we found the servants busily engaged in cleaning the horses, which were always well-tended and fed with excellent forage. Both the servants as well as the horses bore the stamp of their Kurdish home. The men wore clothes made of bright striped texture, and the horses were covered with rich tassels, tufts, and some orna-

ments of a carpetlike material, which, as regards design and combination of colours, recalled to mind the finest Kurdish carpets, known to be the best in Persia. Before we retired to rest we gave most stringent instructions to Ali to send away the Armenian should he come again to disturb our sleep. This precaution proved to be a useful one, for about midnight the old fellow renewed his uproar, but was soon reduced to silence by Ali. South of Goigân the mountains approach close to the lake, and near the village of Chanaga the road runs along the edge of the water—which enabled us to convince ourselves of its salt taste—and then leads across barren chains of hills not far from the lake. The quarries from which the famous Tabreez marble is extracted are situated in these regions. The stone is generally of a light yellowish hue, and transparent. The ruins of the Blue Mosque, at Tabreez, contains some fine slabs; they are of a light colour, and almost as clear as crystal.

The road, which diverged a good distance from the lake, so that the waters could be seen from time to time through an opening in the intervening mountains, again descended into a flat plain along its shores, leading, through villages pleasantly situated, to Chanian, our quarters for the night. The small village not being able to afford a caravansarai, we had to ensconce ourselves and our things in the small room of a peasant's house. Whilst we were still busy about this operation a picture tragi-comical in the highest degree presented itself to us. The young Armenian appeared in the courtyard in the most abject state of mind, and leading

his horse by the reins. We inquired what was the cause of his distress, and he naïvely replied: 'I cannot endure existence any longer. During the night my father will not allow me to go to sleep, and during the day I am compelled to sit on horseback. I have fallen down with fatigue, and would have preferred to remain lying on the ground.' We did our best not to explode with laughter. His sufferings could not have been so very severe, for during the next day he rode sturdily his forty-two miles, and never once thought of dying.

Our attention had been attracted by a curious apparently artificial mound at a little distance from the village, especially as we had already passed in the morning several tumuli of a rather considerable height, bearing Arabic inscriptions. In the afternoon we set out to inspect this mound, but it finally proved to be at a greater distance than we had at first imagined. We had to cross over several wooden aqueducts of unsafe condition until we reached a small village, near which lay the mound. To our amazement our arrival did not excite the slightest curiosity on the part of the population, although a European could scarcely ever have been seen there. The mound was sixty feet in height, and about 300 feet in length. To all appearance it consisted solely of potsherds, like Monte Testaccio, at Rome; but there was no trace of any monument to be discovered on it. The view was again glorious. It resembled the one we had admired yesterday, with the exception that the lofty Kurdish mountains were lying nearer to us; and in the foreground, on the lake, were picturesque

groups of rocky islands, which, uninhabited by man, are said to swarm with goats and wild sheep. The glorious colouring of an Eastern sunset enhanced the charms of the surrounding country, which is not destitute of mythical interest; for, according to tradition, this was the birthplace of Zoroaster. Darkness had set in when we returned to the village, where we found our devoted attendant Ali anxiously awaiting our return.

As we had a long journey of forty-two miles to perform the next day, our start took place at 2.30 A.M., in pitch-darkness. Ali's dread of robbers was soon to be confirmed, for not far from the village we came across the body of a man who, to all appearance, had only just been killed. We inquired of Mahmoud whether he was not going to ride back to the village and make known the circumstance; but he shrugged his shoulders and gave the characteristic answer, 'Will that bring him back to life?' After this incident it is not surprising that we kept our guns as near to us as possible. The road now re-entered the tract of land periodically inundated by the waters of the lake, and to avoid continuing the road along the foot of the mountain, which would have been a very roundabout way, a very strong stone dyke, some four or five miles in length, had been erected across the swamp. This was the only specimen of road construction which I met with in Persia. It undoubtedly dates from a period many centuries back, and is so substantially built that it may remain standing for many centuries still. At sunrise we reached the pleasant village of Binab, situated at

the south-westernmost extremity of an offshoot of the Sahend, where our appearance created such excitement that, notwithstanding the early hour of the day, large crowds collected around us whilst one of the horses was being shod, and followed with intense interest our proceedings whilst seated at breakfast. Whilst the people were looking on in mingled curiosity and awe a ragged Dervish, flourishing a wooden club, pressed his way forward, and wishing us a happy journey, begged for a small present. One panabat (about fivepence) secured for us the maximum of his good wishes. Further on, beyond the village, which contained a rather important bazaar, a long, handsome bridge, built on arches, extended across the Sofitschai, the bed of which now lay perfectly dry; and then began again the flat swampy shores of the lake.

During winter and spring Souk-Bulak can only be reached from Binab by very roundabout ways. The tracts of land lying low become then quite impassable, and the caravans have to follow the border of the mountain as far as the town of Mijanduab (Merhemetabad), whence they are able to cross the valley of the river Dshagatu. The map projections of this country are still in a very deficient state. Kiepert places the course of the Dshagatu at a point about five miles to the south of Binab, and he removes the village of Tschillik to the Tataû; in reality we had to ride for seven hours to get from Binab to the Dshagatu, and the course of the latter would never correspond approximately with the Tataû of Kiepert, which must thus

be placed at a point a good many miles further west. We only came to one river, of inconsiderable size, the bed of which lay quite dried up, between Binab and the Dshagatu, and this could not be taken for the latter river, which always has an abundant supply of water. The ride across the swamp, now dried up, was by no means a pleasant one under the scorching sun (beginning of November!) the more so as the country was totally uninhabited; only here and there did we see in the far distance a few black nomad tents; but the dreary nature of the country was redeemed by a view of the mountains of Kurdistan, which we approached nearer and nearer, and the snow-covered peaks of which seemed to promise refreshing shade. It was afternoon before we reached the Dshagatu, which river forms the boundary between the Turco-Tartar and the Kurd tribes; the frontier between the Turco-Tartars and the Persians is situated a little further west. The Dshagatu was about 300 feet broad, and its waters, clear as crystal, were flowing rapidly over pebbles; it was now only one foot deep, and easily fordable. We found a small but otherwise very comfortable lodging in the village of Tschillik, situated on the left bank of the river, and which is the last village inhabited by Tartars. A picturesque sight awaited us on entering Kurdistan—a Kurdish chief, richly clad, passed us, followed by a large retinue.

In spite of the Armenian, who was again harbouring designs to the prejudice of our repose, we settled with the tscherwadar that the start was not to take

place before sunrise, especially as we were only twenty-eight miles distant from Souk-Bulak. We were obliged to abandon the project of a short excursion to the rock Taschtepe, which is covered with cuneiform inscriptions, as the trip would have taken us several miles out of our way to the south-east. We had less hesitation in making this sacrifice, since, according to Ritter, the inscription had been deciphered by Rawlinson, or rather had been pronounced by him to be undecipherable. We rode at first for a short distance across the debateable ground of the lake, the swamps of which are overgrown with rushes, which are said to swarm with wild boars. Further on the road ascended slightly, and then crossed a well-irrigated, cultivated plain, intersected by a network of canals, and bordered by the offshoots of the Kurdish mountains. The river Tatau must be situated here; it is identical, to all appearance, with the stream flowing out of Souk-Bulak, or, at all events, the latter is one of its affluents; but it was utterly impossible to distinguish the actual river from the multitude of streams which at this point traverse the country in all directions. Some of the canals swarm with fish and tortoises, both of which, never being molested by man, allow themselves to be caught with the hand.

The first Kurd whom we met on horseback, armed with his lance, seemed to be an itinerant troubadour, for after the first greeting he drew a small clarionet out of his doublet and favoured us with a lengthy melody on that instrument. He was not overburdened

with modesty, for after the concert was concluded he not only claimed our grateful acknowledgments but also a suitable metallic recompense; nor was he satisfied until he had received a qran. The Kurdish villages on the way did not in their construction differ materially from Persian villages, but the surrounding features, so entirely new to us, imparted a pleasant aspect to the scene. The bright costumes of the men contrasted agreeably with the perpetual brown garments of the Persians. The women, strongly built, and generally of handsome appearance, were unveiled, and stared at us with eyes beaming with curiosity. This was a cheerful sight after the muffled-up grey figures which throng the streets of Persian villages. Our tscherwadar must have been well known in the village of Hadshikosch, for everyone pressed forward to greet him, whilst the usual requests were addressed to us for medicaments to cure the 'ills that flesh is heir to.' On this occasion we came across a beautiful finely worked coat of mail, which we bought for a small sum of money. Notwithstanding our exertions we failed to discover any trace of the ruins of ancient fire-altars, supposed to exist in the valley, which gradually narrows towards Souk-Bulak; but there must be some ruins extant in these regions, and probably also some cuneiform inscriptions—to judge, at least, from the accounts of Mahmoud. According to his statements hidden treasures lie scattered among the mountains, the existence of which treasures, as is known, Oriental superstition invariably connects with that of old

temples and inscriptions. Mahmoud had obtained his information from a 'wise man,' who kept a record in a book of all the treasures buried away in the surrounding district. However, the sage does not seem as yet to have laid his hands upon any of them.

At Souk-Bulak (which is pronounced Soutsch-Bulach) we were received by an Armenian sent by the Russian Taperbaschi, who had already been apprised of our arrival. He conducted us to a house well-constructed, though destitute of every article of furniture, but which, at any rate, afforded us ample space for stretching out our limbs. Scarcely had we installed ourselves within its walls when the owner, a member of the important colony of Armenians near Ispahan, made his appearance in company with the Mr. Grünfeld already mentioned. The latter was a man who had travelled far and wide and acquired a world-wide experience; hailing from Galicia, he had been driven here by destiny, and he seemed to be in very prosperous circumstances. Known by his Christian name, Isaac, throughout Azerbijaun and Kurdistan, he combined the commercial qualifications of banker, landed proprietor, and man of business. At any rate, the Kurdish Khan of this place appeared to be dependent upon him for financial accommodation. We may congratulate ourselves upon having made such a valuable acquaintance, for without his mediation we might have found ourselves in a sorry predicament. It happened in this wise. Our tscherwadar Mahmoud had engaged himself at Tabreez to convey us to Mossoul at the rate of three tumans per day, and on the faith of his good reputation

we had omitted to enter into a written agreement with him. On arriving at Souk-Bulak he suddenly changed his mind, and instead of the total amount of thirty or thirty-three tumans, to which he had previously pledged himself, he now laid claim to the preposterous sum of sixty-eight tumans. When reproached with his breach of faith he pleaded in excuse bad roads, robbers, and the like, adding, with a superb smile, that surely we were far too noble gentlemen to let a poor man suffer any damage. Mr. Grünfeld, to whom we appealed for mediation, suggested two ways of extricating us from our embarrassing position: No. 1, to bring Mahmoud before the Khan and to have the bastinado administered to him, which little service the Khan would certainly not refuse to us. In this case, however, it would prove difficult for us to find another tscherwadar, since everyone would stand in dread of being paid by us in the same coin at Mossoul. He therefore recommended a second alternative, which, though more expensive, was nevertheless much more practicable, viz. to make the best of a bad bargain with Mahmoud. We agreed to this course of action, and, thanks to Mr. Grünfeld's powers of persuasion, Mahmoud came down in his pretensions to fifty-three tumans—still an excessive amount. The following day being a day of rest, and the succeeding day a Wednesday, on which neither price nor persuasion would have induced Mahmoud to continue the journey, two entire days remained to be devoted to Souk-Bulak.

Soon after our arrival at Souk-Bulak we had a very

agreeable surprise. Some letters for us had arrived at Tabreez, and our host there had sent them on to us by messenger, who in three-and-a-half days had walked on foot the distance of 145 miles. This shows that the Persians are still, as in olden times, good pedestrians. The performance, too, was no very expensive one, for the messenger only got four roubles for the whole journey there and back, and he appeared amply satisfied with his reward. We had announced our visit to the Khan for twelve o'clock at noon; he had sent us on the previous evening the Peschkesch (host's gift, or present made to a stranger) consisting of a sugarloaf and twelve pears. This attention we returned, according to custom, by a donation of money to the servants, bearers of the present, and by the gift of a stereoscope, with pictures, for the Khan. It would not have been proper to have called upon him earlier in the day, for it was the fourth day of Ramazan, the month of fasting. The faithful celebrate the night with joy and feasting, and they sleep during the daytime. Of course only the well-to-do classes can afford such great devotion. We spent the whole forenoon in the streets. The little town, as far as architecture is concerned, differs in nothing from any Persian town, but the peculiar type of the inhabitants and their costume stamped it with a decidedly cheerful character. Kurds here, belonging to the Mikri tribe, are of remarkably fine stature, with a frank expression on their regular features, and they will bear comparison with the Georgian population. Their black, well-kempt beards

impart a somewhat martial cast to the countenance, whilst their large eyes have now and then a rather insipid expression. The dress consists of moderately wide linen pantaloons reaching down below the knee, leather shoes with woollen buckles, and Persian stockings; over the short blouse they wear a jacket without sleeves, of a very coarse woollen material, which looks like an imitation shirt of mail, and which fits tightly round the chest. The girdle, the buckle of which is always ornamented with silver rosettes, contains the curved dagger which formerly was in use in Persia, but which has now been replaced by the Tscherkesse knife. As regards head-dress they wear a tight-fitting felt cap, with a variegated blue or red kerchief wound turban-fashion round it. When on horseback the Kurd always carries a lance and shield; the former of bamboo, the latter of rhinoceros-skin, both of which, as I have been assured, are imported from India *viâ* Bagdad. The Kurdish fair sex is not veiled, and thereby contrasts very favourably with the timid, constantly veiled Persian women. The figures of the former are generally strongly built, and their features are regular, though often coarse, but are not disfigured by tattooing, as is the case in Turkish Kurdistan. The men, too, are more open in their intercourse with strangers than the Persians, and moreover, being Sunnites, they have no prejudices about associating and eating together with Christians. Their language is Kurdish, known to possess a close affinity with Persian, but everyone understands Turkish and Persian.

We looked in vain in the bazaar for the famous Kurdish carpets, of which, as generally is the case in small towns, there was no supply; neither did we succeed in hunting up one of those beautiful bits of embroidery such as were worn by our packhorses. We found, however, other kinds of embroidery, on leather and cloth, very pretty and remarkably cheap; for instance, a saddle of red leather, with richly embroidered trappings, costs only six roubles. Amongst silver workmanship our attention was especially drawn to those peculiar rosettes which are everywhere met with throughout Kurdistan as far as Mossoul; they have a conical shape, and appear to be formed of a number of silver beads. With the exception of the bazaar the town presented nothing worthy of notice. It lies in a hollow between barren mountains, at the bend of the merry little stream, and its aspect is rather monotonous; but when seen from the water's edge, along which very extensive dyers' works and bleaching-grounds are situated, it produces a pleasing impression. When one of my companions took a sketch of the town a crowd of worthy notables collected around him, following with satisfaction the process of the drawing, and apparently appreciating what they regarded as an honour paid to their town. Omitting this little episode, we were here far less the object of general curiosity than in other Oriental towns, although a European at Souk-Bulak must be a *rara avis*.

On our return home we found a guard of honour waiting to escort us on our visit to the Khan; it con-

sisted of twelve warriors and a host of attendants. Mr. Grünfeld accompanied us as interpreter. Mechmed Ali Khan Mikri, a handsome but wild-looking man of about thirty years of age, received us in a hall, already in a very dilapidated condition, the chief ornament of which consisted in three wooden curved-back chairs of Vienna make; as these had only six whole legs between them it required a good deal of systematic poising to remain seated on them. The conversation turned upon the late war, and was opened with the following naïve question. He begged us to tell him candidly (his actual words were, 'Not after the Persian manner, but in accordance with truth,') how great the superiority of numbers had been on the side of the Prussians, for hitherto the French had been looked upon as invincible. After the customary compliments on both sides, and after the Khan had invited us to a hunting-party for the next day, we took our leave, in order also to call upon his Wekyl, Achmed Khan. Whilst we were walking at a solemn pace through the narrow lane we beheld to our dismay the ominous curved-back chairs being handed out of the window, and carried in advance to the house of Achmed Khan, in order that our reception there should be equally brilliant. The Wekyl was a kindly man, who seemed to be chiefly interested in the subject of arms and horses. He put many questions to us concerning our breech-loaders, which he had seen the day before, and showed us his splendid Arab steeds, amongst which a magnificent grey mare, nearly seventeen hands, especially attracted

our attention. Here too they have the bad habit of enveloping horses in thick rugs, to preserve the beauty of their hair; this practice renders them very liable to catch cold, and predisposes them if rubbed or galled to suffer more from sore backs than other horses whose backs have been hardened by exposure. According to Mr. Grünfeld, who is initiated into all the ins and outs of the place, neither the Khan nor his Wekyl reposes on a bed of roses. Although the rank and title of the Khan, as chief of the tribe of the Mikri Kurd, have been hereditary in his family for above 700 years, and cannot be taken away from him by the Shah, yet the former has every year to buy from the Government—by means of presents and bribes—his post as Governor of the district of Souk-Bulak. This tribute represents a yearly sum of about 12,000 tumans, which the Khan raises at high interest (as much as 50 per cent.), and which, with a proportionate surplus, he manages in the course of the year to bring back to his pockets by enforced taxation, extortions, and also occasionally by a little plundering expedition. We had the very next day an instance of his patriarchal government.

The Khan sent us horses for the hunt on the following afternoon; they were very good animals, but carried the uncomfortable Oriental saddles, which were a source of much uneasiness to us at first. The picturesque hunting-party assembled before the gate of the town; it consisted of the distinguished members of the tribe and of an escort of thirty men armed with lances. Most of the party wore rich Kurdish costumes, the

bright colours of which, contrasting with the yellow mountain-walls, presented a brilliant spectacle. The Khan and some of his relatives had donned Persian dress; one venerable old man even wore on his fur cap a shade of green pasteboard, which is used in Persia, and which gave him somewhat the appearance of a schoolmaster. At a signal given by the Khan the hunting-party galloped up the mountain slopes, with several beautiful greyhounds in front, and behind followed the retinue, riding in a line. The pipers were all the time playing the favourite march of the celebrated robber-chief, Kjöroghlu. A falcon had also been brought in case of need, but its services were not required. Hares seemed to be not entirely a rarity, for in the first hour the dogs had hunted up two, whilst two more escaped amongst the crevices of the rocks. Feats of horsemanship were then performed before us, wherein the Kurds, however, proved to be far inferior in dexterity to their neighbours in the Caucasus; and, finally, we were called upon to show off our guns. The loading and firing of a breech-loader produced a magic effect; and a shot at 600 paces, although fired at random, called forth general amazement. It seemed to me that it was more the excellency of a gun possessing so long a range which excited their wonder than the possibility of striking an object at so great a distance. The guns carried by the Kurds proved to be very inoffensive toys; nine times out of ten they missed fire, and a bullet would not take effect at a hundred paces. On returning to the town we were eyewitnesses of an

episode in Eastern administration. Two Kurds suddenly came galloping across the mountain; they rode up to the Khan, and with quivering lips complained that their village had been totally plundered the previous night. The Khan made no reply, but quietly rode on; which treatment so embittered one of the two Kurds that he tore off the turban from his head and flung it contemptuously at the Khan's feet. But even this did not move the latter, and nothing else remained to the Kurd but to lift up again his turban from the ground. According to what Mr. Grünfeld told us, the supposed robbers were probably nothing else than deputies of the Khan; for the latter seemed to suffer from pecuniary embarrassment, and was not altogether very scrupulous with regard to the choice of his means. A complaint to Teheran is useless in such cases, for the Khan can always bring forward the pretext that the plundered natives were rebels and ill-disposed subjects of the Shah, and that he had punished them solely in the interest of the Government. Should, however, the Government wish to interfere in the business it would be powerless in action as regards Kurdistan. On returning to the town we took our leave of the Khan, and rode to our quarters to make the necessary preparations for our departure on the morrow.

A choice of two routes exists to get from Souk-Bulak to Mossoul by way of Rewanduz. The northern route leads through the district of Sulduz—south-west of Lake Urûmia—to Uschnî (also called Uschnû), and thence crossing the pass of Kellischin, said to be

above 10,000 feet in height; passing, further on, an old Persian cuneiform inscription; then traversing the valley of the Sidakatschai to Rewanduz. Former travellers having described this route as being very romantic, and we being attracted by the inscription, which had been rarely seen, had originally decided in favour of this route; but Mahmoud doggedly refused to follow it, giving as a pretext that this route was too arduous and too lengthy. Both of these assertions may not have been entirely devoid of truth, but his real reason seems to have been that he did not know the way. The route, situated several miles further south, and divided from the Kellischin by the pass across Mount Sheik Iwa, has, according to Kiepert's map (1849), been traversed by Perkins, and subsequently by a Swiss traveller. This was all the information I could obtain on the subject. Mahmoud called it the Pass of Garuschim, and described the route as easy and comfortable. We therefore chose this latter route, and had no cause later on to regret our decision, for the former route could hardly have surpassed it as regards beauty of scenery. Mr. Grünfeld quite tranquillised our apprehensions concerning the dangerous character of the natives, who are reputed to be the most ferocious amongst the Kurdish tribes. He stated that it was quite out of the question for any native to dare to approach three well-armed Europeans; but he still advised us to carry our guns in the most demonstrative manner. Mr. Grünfeld had frequently undertaken long journeys quite

alone; and although he is known throughout the country to be always carrying large sums of money about his person, yet his double-barrelled gun had succeeded in keeping people at a respectful distance.

The Khan, unfortunately for us, insisted on our being escorted by six horsemen armed with lances, and their unpunctuality delayed our start still 9 A.M. They also rendered themselves extremely obnoxious on the road by their insolent behaviour. We left behind at Souk-Bulak the whole crowd of our former followers, including the Armenian, with the exception of one whom we readily permitted to join us. This was the Mecca pilgrim who had accompanied us on a donkey from Tabreez. Hadshi Mechmed Dshafar was one of those characters which can only be met with in the East. He was born at Kerbela, of Persian parents, was thirty years of age, resided at Bagdad, and was a great traveller. He had visited Mecca, had spent two years in India, and was now returning from Kerman, the easternmost portion of Persia. His faithful companion was a donkey eighteen years old, which was devotedly attached to its master, and was the most intelligent 'long ears' I ever saw. I never could make out what was the social position of the pilgrim or the object of his journey. He was, to all appearance, a polished man, who, besides Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, also spoke Hindoostani. He was conversant with the Persian poets, and, strange to say, wrote a most beautiful hand, which accomplishment in the East is always the criterion of a man of education. Together

with these advantages he possessed a handsome and refined countenance, and his hands were always soft and clean, which astonished us the more, as he looked himself after his donkey, and had no other baggage but a rug and a kalian. Only on our arrival at Mossoul did we learn that he belonged to the sect of the Bâbi, which is strictly prohibited in Persia, and is subject to persecution. It is quite possible, then, that behind the mask of the pilgrim he concealed projects of reform and of high treason. Towards ourselves he always displayed the attributes of a harmless traveller and pleasant companion, who would make himself useful in many different ways, and who would even in an emergency pound sugar and sew on buttons.

Our road at first led up the valley of the river of Souk-Bulak, and then ascended the barren and totally uninhabited mountains on the left bank. We now rode for hours through desolate mountain regions, without either variety or view. Ever and anon we could see the distant waters of Lake Urûmia glistening in the background. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the watershed of the Little Zab, at an altitude of about 6,180 feet, and from here we had a beautiful parting glance at the lake and the snow-crowned Sahend mountains, which were already disappearing beneath the blue horizon. The district Lahidshân, inhabited by the tribe of the Balbas-Kurds (Bilbos according to Ritter), and watered by the Little Zab, lies at an elevation of 5,650 feet; and our descent from the watershed to the fortress of Paschy was a

very rapid one. Kiepert's map gives a shorter route, but across a higher pass, leading thither from Souk-Bulak by way of Legwin. Paschy, which the Russian map gives as *Passoa*, whilst Kiepert has it *Pisaw* and *Peshwa*, seemed, viewed from a distance, to possess a very defiant-looking castle. But all magnificence of aspect vanished on approaching the spot, and there only remained a crumbling wall encircling a large empty space and protecting the little house of the Khan. We had been recommended to the latter, whose name was Achmed Agha, but he displayed an example of inhospitality perfectly unheard-of in the East. Despite the letter from the Khan of Souk-Bulak he rudely turned us away from his threshold. We found in the village below a peasant of kinder disposition, who gave up to us the best room in his house, which was a cow-shed. This latter place we had to share along with the donkey, but our long-eared companion conducted itself in the most exemplary manner. Scarcely had we commenced preparing our frugal repast when we were interrupted by the arrival of a herd of cows, apparently disconcerted at finding their abode already occupied; they were, however, driven further on, to the Harem, where they were to spend the night in company with the ladies of the house. These latter were filled with the deepest curiosity, and they evinced especial interest in the material of which our cloaks were composed; the men, too, whose countenances betrayed a more savage and ferocious expression than the Kurds of Souk-Bulak, annoyed us by their importu-

nities, which, however, were not ill-meant. As usual our medical advice and assistance were in high request. When the Khan heard of the golden pills which were being so liberally distributed he sent down to us an invitation to exchange the peasant's hut in favour of his own house. However, we refused with thanks this tardy offer of hospitality. The escort given to us by the Khan of Souk-Bulak continued to give us great annoyance; after having been the whole day a source of hindrance to us, they now demanded in a very insolent manner payment of one tuman per man. They were only brought to reason by our offering the alternative of accepting the handsome *pour-boire* which we were prepared to give or of going away empty-handed.

The district of Lahidshân consists of a plain about twenty miles long and about twenty miles broad, bordered on the west by the gigantic wall of the Zagros mountains, the frontier-line between Turkey and Persia, and on the three other sides by wild and barren mountains of considerable height. It is watered by the two sources of the Little Zab, which, several miles after their junction, traverses the mountain range through a deep rent visible from Paschy, and which then flows towards the Tigris. Before us lay the mountain and pass of Garuschim. The two sources of the Zab—the eastern one of which we had to ford twice on horseback, and the western one once—attracted our notice by the great volume of water in a course of scarcely twenty miles in length. Probably the mountains collect sufficient water during winter to feed the extensive source-system

until autumn; nevertheless both mountains and valleys were perfectly sterile. A deep swamp, in which the pilgrim and his donkey nearly stuck fast, lay between the two streams; the ground then gradually ascended, and at the village of Hani, which the Russian map erroneously describes as having been destroyed, we reached the base of the mountain-range. According to the description (*vide* Ritter's Geography, ix. 599) of a former traveller who had crossed the Zagros chain to the south of the ravine through which the Little Zab flows, we now looked forward to a most difficult mountain passage. To our great surprise we reached the Turkish frontier after an hour's ascent of a steep but otherwise not arduous path, leading across a ridge some 1,200 feet in height above the valley; the actual watershed lay lower down. As regards scenery the transition was not less startling here than had been the transition from the richly wooded district of Talysch, on the Caspian Sea, to the barren high plateau of Iran. Scarcely had we ridden a few minutes on the far side of the watershed when foaming brooks came rushing down on all sides; the ground became covered with turf, and beautiful evergreen oak forests appeared on the mountain slopes. Our farewell view of the barren yellow mountains of Persia was thus rendered easy to us. After several hours' ride through a grand but yet lovely valley we reached Rajât, the Turkish frontier village, where a Turkish official received us in the most amiable manner, and conducted us to his very neat house. Our firman inspired him with due respect,

but that document did not deter him from exacting ten piastres for the *visa* of our passports, which latter had no actual existence. As regards outward appearance the Kurds of this place do not differ from their Persian neighbours; but according to the assurance of our Turkish host they are a thievish, insupportable race. These characteristics we were soon to experience. In the evening we bethought ourselves of the parting gifts of our kind friends at Tabreez, and in a solemn bowl of hot whisky punch we celebrated our entry into Turkey by this very unusual route, and at the same time our men regaled themselves on a pillau of gigantic dimensions.

The horses not appearing the next morning at the proper time, Mahmoud was brought to task for his want of punctuality; it then came out that all our girths had been stolen in the night, and that we were no longer in marching condition. Suspicion pointed to a villager as being the thief; but the local bailiff to whom we appealed refused us his assistance, saying quite openly that the delinquent was a determined fellow who never gave up what he had stolen, and that he (the bailiff), for his part, would be careful not to come into conflict with the man. Meanwhile the thief had ensconced himself on the roof of his house, and looked down at us quite unconcernedly; an armed demonstration which we made around his dwelling seemed to make but little impression on him. Ali at last hit upon the right expedient: he begged us to retire to our quarters with our guns, and wait there in readiness,

whilst he went to our opponent to propose to him—in true Eastern fashion—to redeem the stolen goods. The man agreed to the proposition, received five qrans in exchange, and fell into the trap prepared for him by bringing back to us himself the stolen property. Here he was at once overwhelmed by armed force, and had to give back the money obtained, and was laughed at into the bargain by his comrades. We let him keep one qran as a souvenir upon his naïvely complaining that he now had made nothing out of the business, which was not fair! This matter being settled, the Turkish official, to whom I had promised—to the great satisfaction of the latter—to bring the whole of the village of Rewanduz under the notice of the Pasha for insubordination, took me aside and dictated to me a list of all the bad fellows of the place, with the request that I would kindly recommend it to the Pasha's special consideration. When the last name had been entered into my pocket-book the Turk appeared visibly relieved. We too felt delighted when the baggage had all been fastened and we were able to continue our journey, for the villagers seemed really to be a rude and unbearable set, and their attempts at extortion had led to constant conflicts.

To-day's journey conducted us through the most romantic scenery which I saw between the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean. The valley of the Rewanduz-tschai abounded in magnificent views. At one time lofty snow-mountains peered through side-ravines of wild grandeur, then the valley broadened into small

recesses in which nestled pleasant villages with rich gardens, half concealed beneath the shade of planes and elms, and encircled by neatly tilled fields; then rocks rising boldly upwards would shut in the valley, and beyond them again a new and extensive view would suddenly disclose itself, in the full glory of a splendid sunshine lighting up in powerful masses of colour the surrounding crags. Add to this picture forest and water, two features of which, for many months, we had been deprived. The forests were studded with oaks, the growth of which is here attended to, as the produce—the gall-nuts—forms the chief branch of commerce of this region, and is exported even to India. The oaks are of more than twenty different kinds, large leaved and small leaved, dark and light green, but always with short stems and heavy crowns. The map gave us but little information regarding the mountain system; we inferred that a lofty snow-capped cone visible through a side valley on our right, and which was not unlike the Matterhorn, must be the Sheik Iwa, the northern side of which is crossed by the pass of Kellischin; but other mountains were lying to our left also covered with perpetual snow, and which apparently contained a small glacier; with regard to this latter range, however, the map left us in the dark. The road was good, and the bridges over the roaring Rewanduztschai, which we had several times to cross, were in fair condition; the last bridge merely consisted of two stems of trees resting upon one pillar, but our horses stepped along it

without the least hesitation. We had now to descend into the valley of a small tributary across a steep wooded hill on which an old deserted churchyard was situated most romantically, and we then reached Tschumarych, the spot which Mahmoud had fixed for our night quarters. On nearer examination we found only a cluster of miserable huts, and we preferred to ride on for another hour, until we came to Dergala. This little place, towered over by an old castle and shaded by primeval trees, was situated in a large hollow, the rocky walls of which were rent by mighty defiles leading to gigantic mountains. We met here with a very hospitable reception; the whole village pressed forward to be of service to us, and the largest house was at once placed at our disposal. Ali had some difficulty in making himself understood, for in this remote mountain region the people understood neither Persian nor Turkish. The romance of travel, even in this grand retreat, was not destined to be unalloyed; for the cats of the village made continual assaults upon our provisions, and the walls were swarming with moths, whilst the floors were infested with insects which left us but little repose.

The next morning a steep and tortuous path brought us to one of the heights which enclose the hollow of Dergala, and thence down into the valley of an affluent of the Rewanduztschai. This latter descent, over a path scarcely a foot wide covered with loose stones and bordering on a precipice, was the only hazardous passage during the whole journey from Tabreez to Mos-

soul; in rainy weather it must be quite impracticable. We prudently dismounted, and left our horses to find their own way down. They picked their way very quietly and sagaciously down the narrow path; the pilgrim's donkey would, however, be wiser than the other animals, and struck out a course for itself. It was not of long duration. Soon our long-eared friend became embarrassed, and could neither advance nor retreat; he then began to slide onwards, and was finally impelled, unexpectedly and with much velocity, in the direction of the valley. On arriving below, we found the donkey lying on its back, hemmed in amongst stones, and with its four legs stretched out towards heaven, but strange to say quite unhurt, with the exception of a few bruises. All tragic element of course at once disappeared, and the donkey's misfortune only raised laughter. That sage creature, however, did not relish the joke, and for hours afterwards shook its ears highly discontented. The valley was enlivened by large flocks of sheep and goats, which, driven by curiosity, ran after us. Shortly afterwards we reached the main valley, and continued along it until we arrived at the town of Rewanduz.

We reached the town soon after noon, and found moderate accommodation in a dirty and draughty structure on the roof of the caravansarai, which latter was filled to overflowing with all kinds of merchants. Thanks to our firman, we fortunately escaped the custom-house examination of our baggage. The Cadi happened to be administering justice in front of the cara-

vansarai, and having nothing better to do I sat down next to him, handing in my firman by way of introduction. He carefully unfolded the lengthy document, and prostrated himself before the signature of the Sultan which was at the top of the writing, and then read aloud to the numerous listeners the entire contents of the long-winded document. It commanded the several Governors-General and other authorities to allow me to circulate freely and without hindrance, to assist me with advice and protection, to provide me with horses and escort on demand, and to see that I reached again my native land without suffering harm. The reading being concluded, the Cadi resumed the exercise of his judicial functions. The proceedings were about a flimsy action to recover arrears of wages amounting to six qrans. The procedure was conducted by word of mouth, and in this respect was interesting to the European jurist, as the public often mixed in the proceedings without being called upon to do so, and the whole bore more the character of a deliberation taken in common than that of a judicial sitting. Sentence was pronounced at last: four qrans were struck off the original claim, two being allowed, and in respect of these two the plaintiff was called upon to take an oath, which he at once did in the hands of the Mullah who was present. The losing party strove to appeal to the bystanders' sense of justice, but met with no sympathy. We then sent on our firman to the Kaimakam of the province, with the question whether he would receive us; his reply was,

that he begged for our visit on the morrow, and a host of soldiers was sent to form our personal attendants. As our intention was to rest the following day, the delay suited us exactly. We employed the whole of the afternoon in viewing the town, which contained no objects of interest. On maps it is generally written Rowandiz, but in the place itself it is most distinctly pronounced Réwanduz.

The bazaar—save a large selection of 'chaussures,' the most popular of which seemed to be riding-boots with red tops—possessed no attractive wares, and there were none of those Kurdish curved daggers, of which pretty and handy weapons we were anxious to purchase a few specimens to take home as souvenirs. The inner streets of the town were narrow and angular, but its position was most remarkable. The Rewanduztschai, the course of which we had followed, is joined here by the Sidakatschai, which flows down from the pass of Kellischin, and the united streams then cut through a projecting mountain chain by means of a deep chasm, discharging their waters several miles further down into the great Zab. On the eastern side of the town the little Khalifantschai, the course of which river is erroneously stated on Kiepert's map to be west of the town, forms a similar ravine. Rewanduz is thus surrounded by water on three sides and protected by ravines, and the aspect of the town, built terrace fashion, has a somewhat defiant character.[1] The town is pro-

[1] The intelligence lately conveyed by newspapers of the destruction of the town owing to an inundation appears to me, considering its

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tected to the south by a wall which is, however, in a sadly dilapidated condition; but since the events of the year 1830, when the Kurdish Bey was finally subjugated by the Sultan, the town has seen little fighting. The Rewanduz Kurds are now simply Turkish subjects; and a very mild inoffensive Pasha now rules where formerly the cruel, imperious Bey, of whom the whole country down to Mossoul stood in awe, reigned supreme. The Kurdish type is here essentially the same as across the Persian frontier, but in many particulars Turkish and Arabic influence has begun to make itself apparent. For instance, as regards dress, it makes itself manifest in wide pantaloons, and in the jacket richly embroidered with gold and with bright-coloured trimmings; but the material from which these jackets are made exhibits that coat-of-mail kind of texture which had attracted our notice at Souk-Bulak. In respect of Arabic influence, the female sex most suffers from it, for the women have already adopted the bad habit of tattooing. It is probable that the custom has only recently been introduced here, for they only apply one or two faint blue streaks on the forehead and on the cheeks, and occasionally a few perpendicular streaks on the chin; but the nearer the vicinity of the Tigris the broader the streaks become, and at last both the cheeks and the forehead are thickly covered over with tattoo-marks, and the chin forms one single blue blot. It is the same as regards jewellery. On reach-

position, scarcely credible; at the most a few houses situated lower down in the Rewanduztschai may have been washed away.

ing the Tigris the traveller first meets with the rude brass nose-rings, whilst at Rewanduz the fair ones rest satisfied with wearing through the left nostril a small gold rosette with a turquoise in the middle. This one-sided face ornament does not, on the whole, look so bad, and the Rewanduz ladies manage to carry it with much coquetry. Arabs may now be met with among the motley throng in the streets, and the caravansarai was crowded with Mossoul merchants, who had brought from there stuffs and other goods to be bartered for gall-nuts, the principal article of export in Kurdistan. These merchants distinguished themselves by unlimited curiosity, and each step we took was the object of eager attention.

About noon the following day we went in great gala to the Kaimakam, who received us surrounded by the whole of his staff. The guard at the gateway presented arms with the beating of drums, and then pressed behind us into the Audience Hall, there to satisfy at full leisure the feeling of curiosity with which they seemed to be more strongly imbued than with the sense of discipline. The act of politeness in taking off our boots, which our Persian reminiscences prompted us to perform, was quite superfluous on our part, for the Pasha kept on his own—probably to make a show of European civilisation. The Pasha or Kaimakam, who came from Trebizonde, was an extremely young man, and seemed so fair and unsophisticated, that with his purely European dress he would not have looked out of place in any German 'Chancellerie,' in-

stead of being at the head of the wildest region of Turkey in Asia. As he could only speak Turkish the conversation was restricted to the ordinary polite phrases on both sides, which were interpreted by Ali. The Pasha naturally expressed his regret at not having been apprised sooner of our arrival, so as to have been able to prepare better quarters for us. At the end of the interview we were nearly being compelled to accept the honour of a gigantic escort to Mossoul, which he most liberally offered to us. I imagine we might have had a whole battalion to accompany us, had we expressed a wish to that effect. After taking leave of the Kaimakam we returned to our quarters at the Caravansarai, and, in consequence of the rainy weather which had set in, spent the remainder of the day within its not over luxurious walls.

It was 9 A.M. when we set out the following morning on our journey, Mahmoud having been as usual late in putting in an appearance. We left the town by the elevated southern extremity, and at first descended into a very peculiar, oval-shaped hollow of the rocks, which communicates with the valley, or rather with the ravine of the Rewanduztschai, by a perpendicular crevice only a few feet broad. A steep and stony path led out of the hollow to the left bank of the Rewanduztschai. The view from here down into the deeply indented valley which, resembling a split of the mountains, runs up to the Zab, was grand and beautiful, and each spot of less steepness was adorned with luxuriant verdure, forming a glorious contrast to the dark red

tints of the rocky walls. A narrow but tolerably good footpath brought us down to the river; this is the only means of communication between the district of Rewanduz and the outer world. The weather had, meanwhile, quite cleared up again, and we let our baggage go on in order tranquilly to enjoy the beautiful Nature around us, when suddenly wild screams came from the direction in front of us. We thought that robbers were falling upon our escort, and on approaching we perceived six wild-looking fellows standing near our pack-horses, one of whom was in the act of drawing his gun from its case; but instead of firing it off as we expected, he quietly gave the case to one of our attendants, slung his gun again over his shoulder, and went on his way with his comrades. The matter cleared itself up in the most innocent manner. The wild screams which had appeared to us as being war-cries were nothing more than a polite invitation of the man to spend the night in his village, Koniatman, and the gun-case was simply the letter of introduction which he gave us for his brother the village bailiff. Our minds being set at rest, we uncocked our rifles and replaced them in their cases. Thus we were again deprived of the gratification of experiencing a robber adventure. On reaching the foot of the valley we turned off to the left into the ravine of the little Pirsidantschai, a gorge rich in vegetation. This was the last occasion for a long time on which our horses were stepping on turf and amidst thick bushes, both of which now ceased; for the oak-forest now became thin-

ner, and oleander bushes were only to be seen along the banks of the stream. The ride through the valley lasted for nearly two hours, when the mountains gradually receded and the view became more open. We saw that we were on the point of leaving the mountain regions, and that the plain was not far off. Koniatman, our night's quarter, lay on a hill to our right, surrounded by solitary oaks. We reached the village before sunset, and a very good reception awaited us there. The natives willingly gave up to us the best room in the village, that is the 'antichambre' of the mosque, and also did their best to provide for our bodily necessities. The difference is thus very marked between the Sunnites and Sheeites. Whilst the Sheeite Persian avoids all contact with strangers, although he will receive them in his house, the Sunnite, on the contrary, entertains no scruple about eating out of the same dish, and of course the traveller feels decidedly more at home with the latter.

We only took one serjeant along with us from amongst the escort which the Pasha of Rewanduz had insisted on sending along with us. This serjeant was a quick-witted fellow, and had always some advice ready at hand; moreover his services were valuable as interpreter for the Kurdish language, as the dialect spoken here was beyond the comprehension of our attendants. He was also endowed with a rich store of gesticulation, the like of which I never met with even amongst Southerners, and had the inestimable quality of always feeling happy. The Muezzim of the village

took care that we should be up in time, for whilst it was still pitch dark, he stood before our door and with stentorian voice called the believers to prayer. After a short ride we reached the border of the actual mountain range, and beneath us lay the undulating plain of Assyria traversed by the great Zab. It always produces an impression of solemnity to enter a new country, even though it may possess no new attractions. So it was the case with us when we crossed from beautiful Grusia into dreary Armenia, and from the luxuriantly wooded Talysch to the barren plateau of Azerbijaun; and this time, too, we felt in an awe-inspiring frame of mind when we descended from gorgeous Kurdistan down into the barren and parched plains of Assyria. We already discerned in the distance the Dshebel Maklub, with its ridge resembling a camel's hump, and also the gate-pillar of ancient Nineveh. Former travellers had crossed the great Zab by means of a ferry, at a point situated some thousand paces to our right, and had thence ridden in a straight line to Mossoul. But our tscherwadar asserted most firmly and most positively that the ferry was not in a good condition, and that we must follow, in an oblique direction, another route across the Gara-Surdsh, a range of hills lying in front of us. The reason of his refusal, no doubt, took its origin in his ignorance of the other route; in general he had proved rather a dubious guide since Rewanduz, and we gradually came to the conclusion that he had never been at Mossoul. Instead, therefore, of wending our way towards the

Zab, we descended into the valley of a small tributary, and afterwards crossed the barren range of the Gara-Surdsh, which was only a few hundred feet in height, and by no means proved an obstacle. Beyond the latter range there followed a wild confusion of hills, in which we soon lost all traces of a road. Mahmoud wanted to halt at Babadshik, the first village which we came to; but we persisted on riding on a few hours longer to the village of Derrebrusch, situated on a stream bearing the same name. Here we found the elders sitting in solemn conclave on the roof of the mosque, and our Turkish attendant begged from them a lodging for us, in a long speech replete with expressive gesticulations; the result of this rhetoric was excellent, for instead of a narrow peasant hut the mosque itself was given up to us for night quarters. This was an honour which had never yet been bestowed upon us, and which was never again to fall to our lot. The village was pleasantly situated in the midst of a wide valley, on a stream bordered by oleanders. On this beautifully mild evening we took our frugal repast opposite to a defiant-looking mountain-fort with many towers, called Jeni Herir, crowning the range of hills which we had just crossed.

The tiresome ranges of hills continued beyond the Derrebruschtschai; they were scarcely a hundred feet in height, but one chain followed the other incessantly, so that we soon entirely lost our direction in the confusion, and were compelled to ride on at random. The guide whom we had taken with us from Derrebrusch

slipped away, and there remained no other alternative but to oblige a young man who, perched on the top of a donkey, happened to be passing by, to act as our guide; to prevent any possible attempt at flight we sequestrated his donkey, and Ali mounted upon it. Our captive naturally came to the conclusion that we, well-armed men, would not dream of restoring to him his property, and he wept bitterly; great indeed was his surprise when, on reaching the next village, he not only got back his donkey but was rewarded with a qran for his trouble. Before entering the village we had to pass through a small dell, and became involuntary witnesses of a pastoral tableau. We had just turned a sharp corner, when we beheld before us the whole female population of the place engaged in washing their 'garde-robe' in a pond; but as they seemed to be in possession of only one set of garments apiece, their toilette was consequently somewhat scanty. Scarcely had they caught sight of us when there arose fearful shrieks, and they all with the greatest hurry got into their wet garments and then rushed off in hot haste to the village. But curiosity at last surmounted fear, for when we halted in the village we were the object of eager attention on the part of both sexes. Of course we had to show off our guns, and a general scrimmage ensued as to who should get the empty cartridges, in which the secret of the quick firing was supposed to lie. The chief of the place, for whom we had obtained a letter of introduction from the Pasha of Rewanduz, soon appeared in person to escort us fur-

ther on. He seemed to be in affluent circumstances, for his horse, a splendid grey Arab, thorough-bred, cost alone 300 Turkish pounds (275*l.*), and his arms were covered over with silver. His pistols were the especial objects of his pride; I examined them minutely, and found them to be most beautiful specimens of workmanship by the famous master Lazaro Lazarino. At no inconsiderable sum they wandered from his girdle into my possession. Like all Orientals, when mounted on horseback this chief was dreadfully beset by vanity. In order to display the grace and beauty of his really splendid grey stallion, he performed before us, for nearly half-an-hour, every kind of equestrian feat, all the while attacking imaginary foes with his lance, sword, and pistol. He wore a completely Arab dress, consisting of the long caftan with the short jacket over it, and as head-dress the kefije, a square piece of cloth laid loosely on the head and fastened by a cord. During hot weather the kefije, the ends of which hang down, has the great advantage of acting as a fan, and of keeping the face pleasantly cool; but to the back of the head it does not afford sufficient protection against the scorching rays of the sun, and Europeans using it will do well to wear a small cap underneath.

We had no great distance to ride until we reached the great Zab. We left to our left the little town of Reschwân, enclosed by walls, and then followed the course of the Bastoratschai, on the banks of which large numbers of aquatic birds were strutting about. We took them for flamingoes, but did not approach

near enough to make out clearly what they were. At last we reached the river at the village of Girdamamisch. I found the stream stronger and more full of water than I expected at this season of the year; the grey floods rushed rapidly over the gravelly bed, and the width across was well nigh 200 paces. The villagers, however, told us that the passage might be effected without danger; and taking some of them with us to show us the way, we rode a short distance further down to a spot where the best ford was said to exist. We here took leave of the chief of Derrebrusch, who had accompanied us, and also of the Turkish serjeant. We had been very satisfied with the latter, and gave him, in addition to a present, a letter of commendation to his lord and master, the Pasha of Rewanduz, which the pilgrim drew up in a very florid style. In a few minutes' time we arrived at the water's edge, and our horses entered the stream quite courageously. The matter was not quite so easy; the Zab was about 600 feet broad, reached up to the horses' shoulders, and was so rapid that the horses, from time to time, kept losing their footing; but we all succeeded in getting across safely. The pilgrim presented a very comical spectacle; the donkey not being sufficiently high, he took off all his clothing with the exception of his turban and struggled on foot across the stream, whilst his faithful four-footed companion had, in places, to swim by his side. At times we only perceived a huge turban floating on the top of the water, and close by two large donkey's ears. The whole cavalcade met

again quite safe at the village of Kazan, called 'Mendshel' in Arabic, and was cordially received by the villagers, who gave up to us a small but neat room.

The evening (November 14!) was again so beautifully mild that we took our tea in the open air on the banks of the roaring Zab, and we regaled ourselves with the remains of the whiskey which had been given to us at Tabreez. The spot was pre-eminently suited to arouse historical associations; for at no great distance from Kazan was the site of the battle-field of Gaugamela, and some nine miles lower down stood the bridge over which Alexander the Great pursued Darius, and the road which we had taken in coming from Tabreez is undoubtedly the same along which the Persian king sought refuge after his defeat. Above all, there were the ruins of Nineveh within a day's journey, and the Dshebel Maklub, which formerly overlooked the palaces of the ancient Assyrian kings, was in our immediate neighbourhood. But it is inexplicable to me why that battle is always called the battle of Arbela and Gaugamela for it was fought near Gaugamela, between the Ghazyr Su, which we were to cross on the following day, and the Zab. Arbela, now called Erbil, is situated to the eastward at a day's journey from the site of the battle, and is only important in so far that Alexander found there the household and treasure which Darius, on taking to flight, had left behind, and which he took possession of without drawing the sword.

The country between the Zab and the Tigris was almost as desolate in character as Armenia. This

region must have known good cultivation at one time, for many crumbling villages lay along the road, and the walls still standing erect at some places seemed to point to a recent period of destruction. These ruins probably date from the contests of the rapacious and bloodthirsty Bey of Rewanduz, that is, from about the year 1830. Only two small villages, Ardil and Gelük, were still inhabited; and on the banks of the Ghazyr Su, the ancient Bumadus, was situated the large village of Duserreh, called Rasên in Arabic. Almost every locality here has two names, one Kurdo-Persian and the other Arabic. The population of the place, taking advantage of the fine sunny day, was lying about on the ground, and it was only with great reluctance that one of them would give up his *dolce far niente* to serve as our guide. The Ghazyr Su flowed past between oleanders, and, notwithstanding its narrow breadth of only ten paces, was remarkably full of water. On its banks, some five to ten miles lower down, formerly stood the Persian camp which Alexander unexpectedly surprised on his downward march from the hills. Our guide gave us great annoyance. He first tried to lead us astray and to bring us to a village lying close by; he then wanted to change his course entirely; but the direction which he was going to take was so unlikely to be the right one, that his design was at once detected. We now ascended, through a barren waste, to the ridge which separates the Dshebel Maklub from its southern neighbour the conically-shaped Dshebel Mar Daniel. The road pre-

sented nothing but rocks and here and there a ruined village, and above our heads a scorching sun which was nearly unbearable. The heat was even too great for the pilgrim's patient little donkey, for it suddenly laid itself flat on the ground, and did not rise again until its master had extricated himself and was walking on foot; for the next two or three hours the donkey strenuously avoided all contact with its master. The evening had already broken in upon us, when at a bend of the road we suddenly saw at the horizon the minarets of Mossoul, but the town seemed too far distant to be reached that day. The sight of it, however, filled our hearts with gratitude, for it announced to us rest after arduous travel. We soon arrived at a small, wretched-looking village, Tezcharab, which quite justified its name—'soon in ruins;' it certainly looked as if it could not stand erect much longer. The inhabitants were Osmanli Turks, who some thirty or forty years ago had settled here by order of the government, and were little satisfied with the soil, which was stony and unproductive. Notwithstanding this the men were all of herculean build, and looked fresh and merry. The house which comprised our night quarters was neat, but the father of the family which lived in it was lying ill, and the groans which he uttered disturbed our night's rest. Before leaving I gave him a large quantity of harmless medicines, which seemed to quiet his mind, but could hardly have been of much help to him.

Very early the next morning we sent off a messen-

ger to Mossoul. He was to deliver a letter of introduction from the English Consul-General at Tabreez to the English Consul at Mossoul, requesting the latter kindly to provide for our accommodation. He was then to wait for our arrival at the Tigris bridge, and to give us the answer. As for ourselves, we only started at sunrise. After three hours' ride we reached the walls of Nineveh, which still stand there as Xenophon has described them, surrounding by a lengthened rectangle the palaces of the kings. The walls are still preserved as fortified enclosures, but the towers which crown them have now become conical mounds. One of these towers is situated at the spot where the road cuts through the walls. We soon climbed up to the summit, and were gratified with a splendid view, comprising the regular course of the walls, the great mound of ruins of the palaces of Kouyunjik, which they enclose, and the village of Nebbi-Yunus lying opposite, with its mosque proudly rising from a mound, which mosque is supposed to contain the remains of the prophet Jonah, and which is reverenced as a most sacred place. In front of us, beyond the Tigris, the surface of which could not as yet be seen, rose up on an undulating terrain the houses and minarets of Mossoul. Passing between Nebbi-Yunus and the palace mound of Kouyunjik, we soon reached the bridge. It consisted of a modern vaulted flood-bridge, resting on thirty-nine arches, substantially built of brick masonry, but which were now standing quite dry; and of the actual bridge across the Tigris, built on boats and of rather unsafe

construction in view of the large traffic which moved over it. Here our messenger was awaiting us, and was the bearer of very remarkable news, which literally ran thus: 'The Consul is dead, and requests you to consider his house as your own.' Although we had never heard of an instance of *heredis institutio posthuma*, yet we followed our Turk full of confidence through the motley crowd which thronged the streets, to a house, the interior of which was a happy blending of Oriental splendour of colour and form with European comfort. A courtyard, with a fountain bubbling in the centre, was surrounded by four lofty walls in the Moorish style, decorated with magnificent blue encaustic tiles. Doorways led into the several apartments, which were furnished in European style—carpets and divans alone telling of the East. After we had comfortably seated ourselves in one of the rooms, the mystery was solved. A young Chaldean, speaking French, told us that his uncle, Consul Rassam, had died some months previously, but that his father, who now conducted the establishment, begged us to be his guests. He at the same time introduced to us the dragoman of the French Consulate, who had received orders from his chief to act as our guide.

The late Mr. Rassam, a Chaldean from Mossoul, had gone to England in his youth, and had there received a thoroughly European education. On his return to Mossoul, he not only rendered important services in his capacity as Consul during the excavations at Nineveh, but he earned the thanks of scientific men by his tra-

vels throughout the country. He also protected with the greatest vigour the Christian population of the Chaldeans, to which he himself belonged, against Turkish oppression. Some of his immediate relatives reside in England, and we made the acquaintance of two of his brothers who live at Mossoul; but the latter were not acquainted with any European language, and our intercourse with them was only possible through the medium of an interpreter. They gave themselves much trouble to render our stay pleasant, and on all occasions proved themselves to be most amiable hosts, despite their inability to converse with us in any common language. The only Europeans at Mossoul are the French Consul and some missionaries placed under his protection, who labour amongst the Chaldeans. The French Consul, upon whom we called in the afternoon, lives in a villa on the outskirts of the town, and leads a far from enviable existence. Since the excavations of Nineveh have come to an end, his occupation has ceased; and his special study, numismatics, has also come to a standstill, owing to the present scarcity of ancient coins in these regions. The dragoman of the Consulate was our constant companion. His knowledge of languages was restricted to Arabic, Chaldean, and Turkish; but I had many an hour's conversation with him by the help of my scanty Turkish vocabulary, aided by some slight reminiscences of Hebrew, which I boldly turned into Arabic. Of course the language of signs played an important part in this dialogue.

At sunset we sat at a Turkish café at the far-side of the bridge, and tranquilly contemplated the splendid colours of the evening sky, beautiful beyond measure. Beneath us the motley crowd pressed and pushed to get across the bridge before the gates were shut, and in front of us the Tigris calmly flowed onwards, whilst opposite lay the picturesque mound of Nebbi-Yunus, with its proud mosque rising amidst the ruins of ancient Nineveh, resplendent in the bright purple of the setting sun. In the background towered the austere Dshebel Maklub from amongst the snow-crowned mountains of Kurdistan. The purple tint gradually became transformed into a bright orange colour, which painters have in vain endeavoured to reproduce, and finally this too faded away into a ghost-like sombre grey, whilst the din of the streets beneath died out. There is, perhaps, no spot more suitable for the quiet contemplation of a beautiful sunset than a Turkish coffee-house overlooking an extensive panorama; for there, after the worry and heat of the day, the traveller reclines in placid indolence, enveloped in the blue clouds of the tschibouk. But another enjoyment yet awaited us this evening—a Turkish bath, so invigorating after fatigue. The bath attendants having, with Ali's help, scalded us with boiling water, and having then distended our several joints until the latter seemed ready to snap, left us to agony and repose. We soon, however, felt born anew, and that evening we retired to rest on real beds—a luxury which we had not enjoyed for three weeks.

The next day was devoted to sight-seeing in the town. Mossoul is rather pleasantly situated on the undulating right bank of the Tigris, and extensive fields of melons along the river provide a little verdure; further on, it is true, the eye encounters nought save yellow barren plains. The town is rich in mosques with high minarets, to one of which Ritter calls attention as being slightly inclining to one side. We gave ourselves much trouble to search out the real one, but in vain, and came to the conclusion that all the minarets diverged more or less from the perpendicular; not, perhaps, quite to the extent of the leaning tower of Pisa, but resembling the Asinelli and Garisenda towers of Bologna. The town also possesses several Christian churches, but they are more interesting from an antiquarian than from an artistic point of view. The fortress, situated high above the Tigris and the extensive city walls, are, considering that they have been constructed in the East, in tolerable good condition. What especially pleased us about the town was the totally different character of the streets as compared with that of the streets of Persian cities. Although in Mossoul they are quite as narrow and angular as in Persia, they present at any rate high walls with turrets, carved wood galleries, and many a beautiful stone porch, instead of the perpetual yellow clay walls which, owing to the peculiar construction of Persian houses, are always turned towards the street. The throng of different tribes was more varied here than in any other town of the East, Tiflis

excepted. The actual inhabitants are Kurds, with the Arab element strongly marked, and with an infusion of Turkish blood. Real Arabs are also met with, especially merchants, but the official world is chiefly recruited from Turkey; and the number of Chaldean Christians, too, was considerable. But these different nationalities only formed the actual population of the town. There enter from the country ragged Bedouins belonging to the Schammar tribe, with a blue and white striped kefije wound above their bronzed faces; Kurds from the mountains, in their picturesque costumes; Chaldeans from the neighbourhood, with their high-pointed felt hats, very much in the style of Jews, as represented in the pictures of the old German school; and people of that curious tribe, the Yezidis, the so-called devil-worshippers, who abhor all blue colour, and only wear white cloth around their felt caps.

All these nationalities throng and jostle one another in the streets and in the bazaar, gesticulating and screaming in six different languages. Europeans do not attract the slightest attention in the turmoil, more especially as Turkish officials have laid aside their national costume and have adopted the European attire. Very comical effects are produced by an amalgamation of the two dresses; as, for instance, a black frock-coat, and together with it the Arab kefije on the head and yellow-pointed shoes on the feet. We found nothing at the bazaar which we felt at all tempted to purchase, although a French-speaking Chaldean, a ser-

vant of the missionaries, gave himself all possible trouble to bring us to the best shops.

In the afternoon we took a walk to the ruins of Nineveh, which lie opposite Mossoul. There are three different cities of ruins comprised under the name of Nineveh. Each is called after the village situated close to it. The cities are Nimroud, nineteen miles south-east of Mossoul; Kouyunjik, opposite to Mossoul; and Khorsabad, fourteen miles to the north-north-west. The two first places have been excavated by Englishmen on behalf of the British Museum; the latter place by Frenchmen on behalf of the Louvre. The theory held by some high authorities that the city of Nineveh occupied at one given time the space between Khorsabad and Nimroud—that is, from the Dshebel Maklub to the junction of the Zab and the Tigris—is scarcely tenable. Other authorities, which maintain that the different ruins of palaces point to different epochs, may be nearer the truth. According to these latter authorities, the most ancient edifices belong to Nimroud; the next, in order of chronology, to Khorsabad and Kouyunjik, and the least ancient again to Nimroud, where a more recent palace next to the most ancient one bears record of the burning of Nineveh by the Babylonians and the Medes. In the course of centuries, as one dynasty was succeeded by another, the royal residence changed, and the city, the clay huts of which could be as speedily erected as pulled down, followed in the wake of the royal residence. Thus the new seat of royalty gathered around it wealth and population,

whilst the forsaken one gradually declined, and at last remained desolate. This solution will also explain why Xenophon applies different names to the ruins of Nimroud and Kouyunjik, calling the one Larissa and the other Mespila. Each of the royal residences was enclosed by walls. These can still be easily traced around Nimroud and Khorsabad, and at Kouyunjik they are in almost perfect preservation. Although in the latter instance the walls enclose an area which might have held a population of 100,000 souls, yet it must be admitted that the numerous class of agricultural citizens lived widely scattered outside the actual city; and this circumstance will explain how Jonah journeyed three days in reaching the king's palace. There are, certainly, between Khorsabad and Kouyunjik, traces of walls enclosing the whole area; but it cannot be maintained with any degree of certainty that they were destined to enclose the whole of the space which the city gradually occupied. Fortunately for us, we found in Mr. Rassam's house Layard's standard works on the excavations at Nimroud and Kouyunjik, so that we had an able guide to assist us in our researches.

We were much disappointed with Kouyunjik. The mighty palace-mound has not been excavated systematically, and the explorers have been satisfied with unearthing the discovered objects. The trenches have been filled in, and the whole looks like a huge mole-hill, about 750 paces in length, and 450 paces in width. With the exception of a few coloured fragments, we found nothing, nor did we see scarcely any remains

of old brickwork. On the other hand, the ground was swarming with red earth-bucks, and hares encamped in the thousands of ditches and holes; we could have shot any number of them had we not neglected to bring our guns with us. The mound of Nebbi-Yunus rises opposite Kouyunjik. No doubt it still conceals many treasures, but the very sacred character of the mosque and of the tomb of the prophet Jonah, on the top of the mound, has prevented hitherto any excavations taking place. On our way back from Kouyunjik, we paid the first visit to the raft which we had at once ordered for our journey to Bagdad on arriving at Mossoul. In order to get to it we were obliged to walk along the bank of the Tigris, a prey to the awful stench emitted by the butchers' stalls. All the offal is thrown into the water, without the slightest compunction. I still shudder when I think of that road. Our kellek—a raft composed of inflated skins —was still in the first stage of construction, and a large heap of hides, boards and brushwood, showed that our order was being carried into effect. In the evening one of the Mr. Rassams held a dissertation on the Old Testament, his son interpreting. Either the Chaldean History of the Creation must widely differ from our own, or the interpreter cannot have correctly conveyed Mr. Rassam's meaning; in any case Paradise was represented to be in the country about Babylon, and Mount Ararat was removed to Basra. A curious manuscript, beautifully written in the Chaldean and Syriac languages, was the pride of the family, and

a high antiquity by them was ascribed to it. We took care not to destroy these good people's delusion, and we duly admired the manuscript; but Professor Petermann (of Gotha), who visited Mossoul a few years previously, pronounced it to be a rather modern production, and the contents to consist of facetious sayings of very questionable taste.

The following morning, before daybreak, the dragoman of the French Consulate stood at our door with Turkish post-horses, ready for the excursion to Khorsabad. Whilst it was still dark we rode through the town and across the bridge, and at sunrise we reached the mound of Kouyunjik. Leaving it to our left, we cantered on in a straight line towards the western base of the Dshebel Maklub. The region was as desolate here as between Mossoul and the Zab; but the Chaldeans and the Yezidis, who were coming in from the neighbouring mountains, lent some animation to the road. They greeted us in a very friendly manner, and the dragoman, himself a Chaldean, told us that a European might venture, without incurring risk, in the wild mountain districts inhabited by those tribes; whilst Mussulmans, and especially Turks, frequently got a bullet through the head. The first signs of ancient Nineveh was a gigantic winged bull of white marble, with human head, which was lying on its side on the sand, and, except a mutilated leg, was perfectly undamaged. It had been discovered during the French excavations at Khorsabad, and an accident having befallen it during its transport to the Tigris, it had been

left lying here. It must have inspired the population with a supernatural awe, for it has not suffered any wanton damage; with its staring eyes, it presented a weird and ghost-like appearance. Mounted on our fleet Turkish horses, we reached Khorsabad before the heat of the day had set in. The view of the mound of ruins here is substantially the same as at Kouyunjik, that is a mere mystery to the uninitiated. At Khorsabad at any rate we occasionally stumbled on pieces of brickwork with cuneiform inscriptions, the remains of ancient glazings, and fragments of bas-reliefs, the latter probably left behind on account of their imperfect condition. The course of the walls encircling the palace mound could be traced only indistinctly, and as for the heaps of rubbish which explorers persist in regarding as the remains of the fortified enclosure which run round the whole area of the city, I can only accept that theory on faith, for I could not discover any traces of them. Apart from these few relics of ancient times, the attention is arrested by nothing save the view of the Dshebel Maklub, which rises immediately behind the ruins; but this mountain does not here present its characteristic shape, which resembles a camel's hump. The surrounding region is only a yellow wilderness, with the minarets of Mossoul in the background. During the ride home the heat was intense, but, thanks to our excellent little steeds, we reached the town shortly after mid-day. The afternoon was devoted to a *dolce far niente* at our favourite spot—the café across the bridge; in the

evening there was no escape from another biblical exegesis.

Abdallah, the kellekschi, made his appearance the next morning, and announced to us that the raft would be ready by noon, and that we should be able to start in the evening. Shortly afterwards we received a farewell visit from our old friend the pilgrim, accompanied by his brother, who resided here, and with whom he was going to stay a few days longer. The brother, Hadshi Hüssên by name, was a famous doctor at Mossoul, and he had so far advanced in the knowledge of his art that he was able to read the French characters, a feat of which he seemed to be not a little proud. We enriched his store of scientific instruments by the addition of a thermometer, an instrument about which he had heard much, but which he had never seen. He returned the compliment by presenting us with his photograph, in which he was represented feeling a patient's pulse and eagerly staring at a globe in the absence of a watch.

We then went down to our kellek. The last stroke was just being given, and we were able to fix the hour of departure for eleven o'clock Turkish, that is, an hour before sunset. The reader will pardon me for entering into some details with regard to the construction of our raft. The kellek is of such simple construction that it appears to me to be the natural form of a primitive boat, and I feel amazed that we have never heard of similar rafts. Our kellek consisted of 250 inflated sheep-skins; the process of inflation, which we

had witnessed on former occasions, was accomplished in an incredibly short space of time by our Arab seamen, so much so that we were quite overcome with admiration at the power of their lungs. As soon as the skin is filled with air, the orifice is closed quite tight, and finally the bags are bound together in rows by means of switches. The kellek possessed ten rows, each row being composed of 25 bags, and it measured 7·40 meters by 8·25 meters, or a superficies of over 600 square feet, affording ample room for ourselves and our servants. A kind of lattice-work, made out of brushwood, reeds and laths, is then laid on the bags, and after that a layer of planks. The bags are, as far as it is possible, arranged so that the orifices can be reached from above, and the bags again inflated in case they should have given way. Last of all, our tent was erected on the floor formed by the planks, and arranged with every comfort. A second floor, with planed planks, covered with thick straw mats, and over these again with our excellent rugs, served as ample protection against contact with the water below. Some caution was, however, required; for although all the bags, each of which possessed an absolute carrying power of 1 cwt., were tight on the first day, whereby our floor lay one-and-a-half feet above the level of the water, they gradually gave way during the course of the journey, through frequent collisions with stones and sand-banks; and whilst the bags on the edges of the raft were soon re-inflated and put in order again, our tent, under which this operation could not be effected,

gradually sank deeper until, on the day of our arrival at Bagdad, there were only four-and-a-half inches between us and the water. Had the journey lasted longer, we should have had no other alternative but to break up the whole of our kellek and to reconstruct it. Our tent came from Tiflis, and had probably been the property of a Russian officer. We had carried it about with us without being able to make use of it, and had many times complained of the constant annoyances it had occasioned us; now, however, and later on too, in the desert, we felt truly glad to have it with us. The tent had double sides of linen and felt, and kept us warm during the coldest nights; and it was also large enough—seventy square feet—to allow of our moving about freely inside of it. We erected a kind of verandah in front of our tent, and behind was another tent, constructed of osiers and covered with felt rugs, which sheltered our servants. In the space between the two tents our baggage and provisions were stowed away. Ali had now ceased to be our only servant, for we had given him a companion in the person of a former cawass of the English Consulate, Hadshi Ramazan by name. He hailed from Bagdad, and was of great service to us on account of his knowledge of Arabic; in other respects, too, he was a very decent kind of a fellow, and we were very satisfied with him. Behind the second tent was the kitchen, erected in the open air, and this was the spot where the crew generally sat. The latter consisted of four Arabs, two of whom ought always to attend to the oars by day and night; but

they generally sat very cosily all four together and chatted. No great harm came of this, for the four large oars which hung suspended to blocks at the four corners of the raft were little suited to hasten the progress of the craft, and served exclusively to steer; our speed solely depended on the current, which now became very feeble. We had taken two extra men along with us so as to be able to continue floating down the stream during the nights, for with only two men to attend to the raft we should have been obliged to come to a standstill every evening. The price of the kellek is calculated according to the number of skins, averaging about five piastres (1 shilling) apiece; to this must be added a trifling sum for the crew and for the value of the wooden flooring. Our raft cost us eighteen Turkish pounds (about 16*l.* 10*s.*), inclusive of the second tent and of sundry trifles; and it turned out that we had even been imposed upon by the kellekschi, who had charged several items twice over. The kellekschi makes a good business out of it, for timber is sold at Bagdad at a much higher price than it is bought at Mossoul, which is largely supplied with wood from the forests of Kurdistan; the skins after being dried are packed on two mules and sent back to Mossoul. Nor can the keep of the crew be expensive, for the smallest *pour-boire* never fails to transport them with joy and to excite unlimited gratitude.

After paying in the afternoon a round of farewell visits in the town, we had our baggage conveyed to the Tigris by a horde of porters. Our goods and chattels

were very voluminous, and comprised, amongst other things, a dozen live fowls and several large jugs of Mossoul wine, not a very delicate beverage. We had a parting tschibouk with our Chaldean hosts, and also with the pilgrim and his brother, and at sunset we put off from shore. Abdallah, the kelleksohi, who on the water was acting the same part as the tscherwadar Mahmoud had been playing on dry land, contrived, in the hurry of the start, to cheat us out of several pounds, and gave the signal for departure to his men after having got safely back on shore with his ill-gotten gain. For a few moments the minarets of Mossoul and the mosque at Nebbi-Yunus glittered in the evening sun, then darkness set in, and nothing more was heard save the dull monotonous splash of the oars.

We were awakened during the night by a violent concussion, combined with the noise occasioned by the bursting of several skins. Our tent bent in as if it was going to break to pieces over our heads, and the whole crew was on the alert. A rapid eddy, formed by an ancient Assyrian dam, which ran in an oblique direction across the Tigris, had driven us upon a pointed rock. However, we escaped with a fright. Our kellek was scarcely the worse for the mishap, and we soon put our tent to-rights again, and we were not disturbed any more during the night. On rising up the next morning we beheld the lofty pyramid of Nimroud lying before us. We reached the base, and ascended the summit of it after a walk of three-quarters of an hour, and found ourselves at last standing in the midst of the

ruins of Nineveh as we had pictured them to ourselves. The view through the calm and fresh atmosphere was indescribably beautiful. Beneath us lay uncovered the palaces of the Assyrian kings, with their walls lined with marble slabs. At a short distance from the spot where we stood, Xenophon had passed with his 10,000 men. Southward along the Tigris, chains of hills extended towards Babylonia; whilst the mountains to the east and north formed the barrier which for thousands of years had divided Assyrians and Medes, Semitics and Arians. The sky was so clear that we could distinctly recognise the snow-capped mountains on the distant Persian frontier—the Sheik Iwa, and the peaks south of the pass of Garuschim which we had crossed, and the Dshebel Maklub seemed quite near to us, despite the distance of thirty-three miles which separated us from it. Mossoul was hidden from view by intervening hills, and the country around contrasted strikingly with the splendour of former days by its barren and desolate nature, seldom interrupted by the sight of some miserable village. The stillness of the early morn, scarcely broken by the song of a bird, had something solemn and pathetic; and we lingered a long time on the summit of the pyramid gazing at the picture below and around us.

The palaces of Nimroud have been very systematically laid open under Layard's supervision, and therefore convey a far more instructive picture than those of Kouyunjik and Khorsabad. All the rubbish has been carted away, and the ground lines are thus fully

revealed. The yield had been so excessively large that only such pieces had been conveyed to England as were in the best state of preservation, the remainder having been left on the spot. Thus all the sculptures are extant in the palace occupied by the last Assyrian king during the storming of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians; the stone had been so calcined by the action of the fire that it would have crumbled to pieces during the transport. The same halls stand now which stood 2,500 years ago, with the same walls lined with marble and bas-reliefs; and the same lions and bulls still guard the entrance. Fragments of cuneiform inscriptions lie scattered about in great numbers, and large inscriptions, and even sculptures in a good state of preservation, may still be met with. We contented ourselves with carrying away, as a souvenir, a little bag filled with fragments of stones bearing cuneiform inscriptions. Layard has made the construction of the palaces and the divisions of the halls the subject of a thorough investigation, and I cannot do better than refer the reader to his different works. On our return we once more passed the pyramid; it is 144 feet in height, constructed of bricks on a lofty granite base, and looks like the watch-tower to one of the great palaces. We could not resist the temptation of again ascending to its summit to cast one parting glance at the glorious Kurdish mountains and the sombre Dshebel Maklub.

Hardly had our raft been again set in motion than we came to a second rapid eddy, similar to the one

which had disturbed our rest during the night. Here, too, the ancient Assyrians, probably for the purposes of irrigation, had constructed across the river a dam, over which the waters fell some three or four feet deep. Our kellek had easy play; it went down the waterfall like a nutshell, and with the exception of our soup, which on this occasion became mingled with Tigris water, we had to complain of no mishap. The descent being accomplished, the crew naturally collected the customary backschisch. In the evening we reached the mouth of the great Zab, the light blue waters of which discharged themselves through three branches, separated by gravel islands, into the Tigris, and with such violence that the yellow floods of the latter river were quite thrown back upon the right bank, and our kellek with difficulty regained the stream.

The next day (November 21) the country we passed was barren and dreary. On the right bank were low barren ranges of hills, on the left an arid plain; now and then we espied an Arab village, composed of a long row of tents, the existence of which was foreshadowed by melon fields running up close to the river. Our crew could not be prevented from undertaking each time small marauding expeditions, from which they returned laden with stolen fruit and radiant with delight. The quantity of melons they consumed was quite incredible; in other respects they strictly observed the fasting ordinances of the Ramazan month, and did not touch anything between sunrise and sunset. They justified the exception in the case

of the melons by a subtle interpretation. They said, 'The Prophet has forbidden us to eat or to drink by day, but a good melon melts by itself in the mouth, and is neither eaten nor drunk; hence it does not come within the prohibition.' The machines for drawing water which were standing in front of the villages on the banks of the river, and which lower down, where the country is more densely populated, continued in an uninterrupted line as far as Bagdad, were a perfect novelty to us. A basin is constructed at a few paces from the river, communicating with it by means of a sluice; a crane, resting on two trees, is erected over the basin, and a water-conduit hangs down into the river, suspended to the crane by means of two ropes. The crane is set in motion by a horse, which, to increase its drawing power, descends an inclined plane; the water-conduit filled with water rises, and when it arrives at the top it empties its contents into canals or pipes, for the length of the two ropes which support it has been so measured that whilst they draw up the conduit the orifice is at the top, and only when it reaches the right height is the angle sufficiently inclined to allow the water to flow out. After this the horse ascends again, the water-conduit sinks into the river, and the process begins anew. These machines are a source of great annoyance to the traveller. Not only does the eye and the mind grow wearied with the monotonous ascending and descending of these instruments, a hundred of which are often visible at one time, but the ear too suffers from the awful creaking

of the wheels, which are never greased; and to crown the evil, the work is chiefly performed at night on account of the coolness of the atmosphere. A hoarse-throated cock which belonged to our stock of provisions added to our discomforts by chanting melancholy responses, until his turn at last arrived.

The expectations which we had formed of living on game during the journey were frustrated, for the wild fowl, although most abundant, were shy, and would not allow us to get within a hundred yards, at which distance a pelican can laugh at small shot, and we were not very successful on resorting to ball. I shot a cormorant the first day, but its flesh sturdily resisted the action of our teeth, although it yielded to the masticating apparatus of our Arabs. On this occasion I witnessed the hardy disposition of these fellows; no sooner had I shot the cormorant than one of them jumped into the icy cold water (8 degrees Centigrade) and brought back the bird, without being perceptibly affected by the change of temperature. There was not much game to be seen on the banks; an occasional jackal took his constitutional on the river-side in the early morning, and in the evening we heard amongst the bushes the shrill and peculiar decoying cry—tirîtirî tirîtî—of the Francolin hen, but we never were fortunate enough to get a shot at one of them. We saw no traces of gazelles or large game.

We reached Kalah Shergat that evening; it is towered over by a mound of ruins which for size surpasses anything that Nineveh or Babylon can present,

and is crowned by a pyramid similar to the one at Nimroud. It is the most ancient of the ruins in this region, and probably the city which once stood there was already a ruin when Nineveh was raised to the rank of capital of the empire. This great field of ruin with its pyramid looks truly venerable, but science has as yet made no discoveries here which could help to solve the mystery of this remnant of an ancient era. At a distance of a day's journey inland are situated in the middle of the desert the ruins of Hatra, now called al Hadhr, which at the time of the Parthians was a mighty and opulent city. But few travellers have visited its temple of the sun and palaces, the country having been until recently rendered insecure by incursions of wandering Bedouins. We were too much tied down by our kellek, near which we had to remain for protection, to be able to undertake a trip to that place; and dusk setting in, unfortunately prevented us from ascending the pyramid of Kalah Shergat.

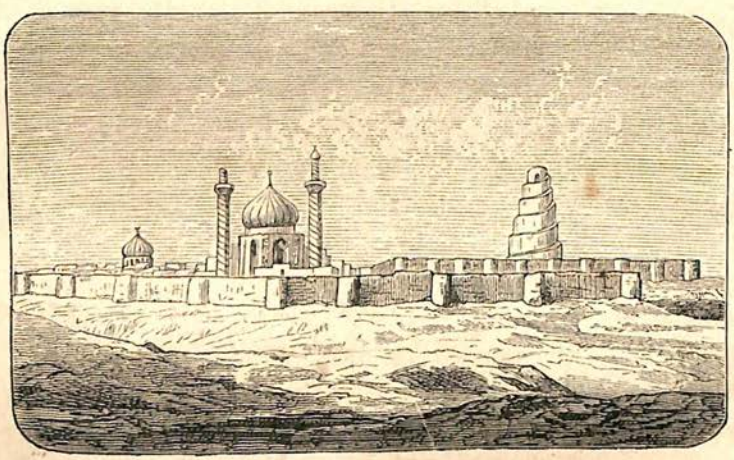
During the night we passed the mouth of the Little Zab, and various rapid eddies again drove the kellek violently against stones, in consequence of which several skins were shattered and others gave way. The scenery during the following day (November 22) was about the same as at Kalah Shergat—a barren plain on the left, and a dusky yellow chain of hills on the right. About noon we reached the ancient frontier line which divided Assyria from Babylonia; the Tigris cuts through the above-mentioned range of hills, which under the name of Dshebel Hemrin continues to the

south-east, and then enters the flat country. Still the river flows pretty deep (about twenty feet) below the banks, yet notwithstanding this it reaches during the spring tides the level of the plateau and inundates the country. The spot where the river cuts through the chain of hills is called el Fattha, 'the aperture.' A naphtha spring is situated on the left bank, which for a distance of many miles covers the surface of the waters with a dirty greenish film, and impregnates the atmosphere in a most disagreeable manner. We were desirous to view the phenomenon close at hand, but had soon to experience, at our cost, that asphalte in its natural state is a most gluey kind of stuff, for hardly had we stopped a short time near the spring, which forms a little naphtha pool, than our boots stuck so fast to the soil that we only with difficulty contrived to regain the raft. A beautiful streak of naphtha and asphalte dancing on the waters, but smelling most fearfully, followed for a long time in the wake of the kellek.

Our toilette the next morning was accompanied by a very solemn incident. Scarcely had the day dawned when we put in at the little town of Tekrit, half-way between Mossoul and Bagdad, and the intelligence of our arrival spread like wildfire amongst the inhabitants. When we drew open the front part of our tent we found the whole male population, about 600 strong, sitting in rows one above the other on the bank, and waiting for us to make an appearance. The elders and notables had of course occupied the best places. We showed ourselves gracious to the curious throng, and

granted them an insight into all the details of a European toilette, and the people looked on with unbroken gravity as if the most important state transaction was being enacted. As for ourselves we saw nothing worth noticing in this miserable abode save two solitary palm-trees, the first which we had met with. Ritter makes the striking remark that the furthest palm-tree in the East always denotes the limit of Arab sway and of Arab life. This district must have been the haunt of the lion in former days, for ancient chronicles report that in the time of Tamerlane five were shot here by one hunting-party; now the monarch of the forest is only to be found in regions far below Bagdad. I cannot account for the retreat of the lion, for advancing civilisation cannot have driven him back, these tracts of country having been far more cultivated formerly than they are now; there, then, only remains the theory that the irrigation of the country, which formerly had been applied on the largest scale, had produced a temperate climate and a mild winter. Now the canals are dried up, and the former grandeur of Tekrit can only be traced by the heaps of ruins which lie scattered around the present miserable little hamlet.

We took advantage of our stay at Tekrit to lay in a store of fresh meat, and we also changed the crew. Our four new oarsmen were as decent and sober as the former ones, but they had a still greater dislike to exertion, and thus we made only little progress; instead of reaching Bagdad in four or five days, as we had hoped to do, we were obliged to make up our minds to



SÂMERA.

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pass a week on the journey. During the spring tides the distance from Mossoul to Bagdad can, it is said, be accomplished in two days; and the old annals speak—although it does not sound very credible—of a twenty-four hours' sail between the two places. About five miles below Tekrit, near a hamlet called Imam Dura, situated on the left bank, and distinguished by the large monument of a saint, begins a mighty field of ruins extending some twenty-five miles along the Tigris. The collective name of the ruins is Eski Bagdad (old Bagdad); here was situated, in the times of the Sassanians and Caliphs, large and prosperous cities, of which nought now remains but irregular heaps of stones, covered with sand and grown over with briars and bushes; as yet only potsherds have been found in them.

The little town of Sâmera (its full name is Imam-es-Sâmera), a very sacred place of pilgrimage of the Sheeites, lies in the midst of this field of ruins some thousand paces distant from the Tigris, and is like a pearl on the sea-shore. The two mosques which adorn it are amongst the most graceful specimens of architecture which I have ever witnessed; the one is surmounted by a well-preserved cupola, entirely inlaid with the famous Persian glazed tiles of different colours and of beautiful designs; whilst the other not only has its cupola, but also the dome covered with gold, and possesses two slender minarets rising at its side. But the most remarkable monument is situated outside the walls of enclosure, which have scarcely suffered from

the action of time. It is a tower of apparently high antiquity, the shape of which is an imitation of the ancient Tower of Babel. Starting from a broad basis it rises upwards, lessening in breadth as it ascends, and a spiral-shaped road starting from the foundation winds itself up to the summit. I was not able to learn anything either as regards the date at which this tower was built, or in respect of the original purpose of its construction. Perhaps some information on these points may be contained in the work (lately published)[1] of a traveller who made a special excursion to this locality. Sâmera appeared to us like a vision of fairyland as we sailed past on the morning of November 24; but we were very careful not to set foot in the town, for nothing vanishes more fatally by contact with reality than a poetic impression in the East.

Shortly after having passed the town we received a curious visit on board the raft; an Arab woman came swimming to us from the village on the banks, bringing with her a basket filled with beans. In the absence of a purse she put the proceeds of her very cheap wares in her mouth, and swam back to shore. Whilst she was in the water, an apparatus as simple as it was practical, consisting of two inflated bags connected by a string and fixed to her arms, supported her with ease. Lower down, where the banks are more populated, we frequently noticed this practice, and a very animated intercourse is kept up by water by individual villages.

[1] 'Voyage en Russie, au Caucase, en Perse, etc.' par le Chevalier Lycklama a Nijeholt. Paris and Amsterdam. 1872.

Although the population increased in proportion as we approached Bagdad, the banks, nevertheless, produced a very desolate impression, and the perpetual creaking of the water-machines did not improve matters. Wild-fowl, however, abounded here, and both our knowledge and our larder were enriched by several specimens of the feathery tribe as yet unknown to us, amongst which was a duck with snowy plumage called Dshen-Kele, and a species of snipe with white breast and grey wings. In the afternoon we sailed past the ruins of a brick bridge built on arches, which I have never seen mentioned in any book, and to which the crew gave the name of Malshatslije.

Our ardent wish to see a forest of palm-trees was at last gratified, for one extended from the village of Saadije for a long distance along the river. We went on shore, and indulged our fancy in standing, walking, and sitting in a palm forest. To be frank, I must confess that the enjoyment was not a great one, for a palm-tree is only really beautiful when it is thick enough to guard off the scorching rays of the sun, and so extensive that it impedes all view of the plain. The dates which we bought were juicy and aromatic. The dates are, as a rule—immediately after the harvest—gathered into bags, and then pressed together so tightly that they form a kind of date paste intermingled with kernels. This preparation, it is true, does not look very inviting, but it has a far finer flavour than the dates dried singly, which soon acquire a woody taste and soon lose all aroma. At Bagdad I first dis-

covered that there are dates and dates; there I met with all kinds, large and small, hard and dry, soft and juicy, some long, others almost round, yellow, light brown, and dark brown. I was therefore not at all surprised to hear that forty-four different kinds are distinguished at Basra, the principal date-market. From this point on the river the banks presented a succession of villages and palm-forests—a pleasing contrast after the dreary scenery of the last few days. The approach to Bagdad was made manifest by the many barges laden with timber and brushwood, which probably came from the small affluent, the Adhem, and which were sailing down the Tigris with us. These barges are of peculiar construction. A circular frame of wicker-work, made of osiers, of six to eight feet in diameter, and with a high border inclining inwards, is thickly coated over with asphalte, both inside and outside, until it becomes water-tight. It then forms the most primitive kind of boat which can well be imagined; in the Tigris below Bagdad it is, with the exception of the kellek, the only means of locomotion by water. At Bagdad this peculiar kind of bark, called *Quffe*, answers the purpose of the Venetian gondola, both for the transport of goods and for the conveyance of passengers. The Quffe which sailed along with us were recently decorated with vari-coloured shells stuck in the asphalte, and some even carried sails rigged up above the high cargo of brushwood. They were rowed and steered by means of sweeps with heart-shaped blades.

A brisk head-wind set in in the evening, which to-

gether with the feeble current rendered rapid progress more than problematical. This *contretemps* was especially annoying, as our kellek had, after a series of collisions with stones and sandbanks, gradually become more than the worse for wear, and we could distinctly hear the splash of the water close beneath our pillows. To obviate the necessity of repairs, which would have cost much time and labour, we aroused our crew to exertion by promise of a good backschisch, and succeeded in getting them to row on steadily during the whole of the next day. At last, about three in the afternoon, Hadshi Ramazan, our second servant, who, being a native of Bagdad, knew the country, announced to us that we might get on shore and reach Bagdad in a carriage by a short cut, whilst Ali would follow by water with the baggage. We somewhat doubted the accuracy of his assertions, since the existence of any means of conveyance by land seemed too improbable to us, no traces of a town being visible; but we gave way to his positive assurances, landed at the edge of a dense forest of palms, and followed his lead. After a short walk through splendid palm-trees we reached a small town, the streets of which were thronged with a merry and motley crowd. It was Kázem, also called Kazmên, to a certain degree a suburb of Bagdad, but it is separated from the actual city by a distance of three to four miles. At a bend of the road there suddenly disclosed itself to our gaze an enchanting sight; the finest of mosques lay there before us quite fairy-like. A large courtyard surrounded a square building of

lofty dimensions. The walls and cupola of the mosque were entirely inlaid with sparkling fleeces of many colours, whilst at each corner of the building rose up a graceful minaret. In marked contrast with Persia, where the most beautiful mosques lie in ruins, and where but few remains attest the splendour of the variegated mural decoration of former days, the mosque here was in a perfect state of preservation, and looked fresh and brilliant. The sparkling richness of colouring, far from blinding or disturbing the eye, is in pleasing harmony with the sunny nature of the clime. This mosque is regarded by the Sheeites as one of their most sacred places of pilgrimage, and the banks of the Tigris and of the Euphrates are rich in holy resorts. It contains the remains of Kázem, a son of Hüssên, and consequently grandson of Ali, the only legitimate caliph. All the pilgrims who wander from Persia to Kerbela and Mesched Ali make this a step on their journey. The place itself is exclusively inhabited by Persians who are reputed to be very fanatical—a circumstance which we were soon to experience to our cost. The mosque does not bear outwardly the type of Sheeite mosques, as they are to be met with in Persia. Whilst the latter consist of an open courtyard with a vaulted hall at one end, the mosque at Kázem is a perfectly enclosed place, after the manner of the Sunnite temples. The minarets, too, rise far above the height to which they attain in Persia; they tower considerably above the lofty cupola, and are slender and graceful in form without, as is the case at Constanti-

nople, falling into the extreme of thinness and of the needle-shape. The galleries for the Muezzim, which run around the mosque at half the height of the building, and are surmounted by a mushroom-shaped roof projecting far outward, serving as a sounding-board, form a peculiar decoration, which, far from disturbing the general effect, pleasantly breaks the long straight line. At such a height the voice of the most powerful Muezzim must be scarcely audible.

Whilst we were standing in silent admiration at the gate of the fore-court a zealous Sheeite made his appearance, and signified to us by gesticulations which could not possibly be misinterpreted that we were to desist from gazing with our profane eyes at the sacred building. We would fain have seen more of the mosque, but deemed it unwise to excite the fanaticism of the Moslem; we therefore continued our wanderings through the busy streets, and at the end of the small bazaar we encountered the vehicle promised by our attendant. Before us was neither more nor less than a tramway of English origin, and the car was just on the point of starting. The tramway owes its existence to Midhat Pasha, the deserving ex-Governor-General. We mounted on the top, and soon were on our way to the city. The driver seemed probably desirous of recalling to our minds that we were not altogether in Europe, but back again in Asia, for he seized the opportunity to cheat us with regard to the fare, and wished to improve the occasion still further by trying to extort a backschisch from us on arriving at the end of the tramway.

To our eyes, accustomed to noticing European passengers, the company here seated side by side was most strange: Arabs with flowing caftans, Persians with high-pointed hats, and a Bedouin coachman with the bright-coloured kefije encircling his bronzed face. We drove through the palm forest high above the Tigris, and had splendid views of the river and of the country houses and gardens on the opposite bank, whilst the setting-sun was diffusing his purple light through the waving tops of the palm-trees. After half an hour's drive we stopped at the upper bridge of boats before the gates of Bagdad. We stepped into one of the quaint basket-work gondolas, and the stream of the Tigris slowly bore us onward to the hospitable home which was to receive us. The sun had sunk beneath the horizon, but the sky still glowed as if on fire, and splendid did the Caliph city appear, right and left, with its minarets and with its palm-trees. We felt in the spirit removed to Europe; our imaginations soared away with us to Venice, and we were gliding softly o'er the waters of the Canale Grande.

CHAPTER VII.

BAGDAD TO BEYROUT.

Our stay in Bagdad—Situation and Architecture—Population—European Colony—Trade—Turkish Government—Review—Arab Horses—Ager Kuf—Ruins of Ctesiphon—Excursion to Kâzem—Adventure in the Desert—Last Days in Bagdad—Our Camel Driver—Camels and their Qualities—Riding on Camels—Ride to Hillah—Iskenderîje—Hillah—Ruins of Babylon—The Birs Nimroud—View from Tower of Babel—The Kasr and Mujelibê—Hanging Gardens—Ride to Kerbela—Kerbela—Commencement of Desert—Oasis-al-Tschiddr—Mishap—Ride through Desert—Characteristic Features of Desert—Mode of dividing Time—Method of determining exact Position—Camp of Bedouins—Lion—Kubetha—Wadi Haurân—Wadi al-Gharra—Well in the Desert—Christmas Eve—Arrival in Palmyra—Ride to Damascus—Forced Marches—Karjetên—Dsherrud—End of Desert—Damascus—Journey across the Lebanon—Beyrout—Dog River—Farewell.

BAGDAD was the final stage for us before we entered upon the most trying part of our journey, the ride through the Desert. In order to give ourselves an ample margin to make our preparations we fixed our stay at Bagdad for a week, and we eventually ended by remaining eleven days. This delay suited us exactly, as this city presented such an abundance of interesting sights that we left it almost with regret. After spending the first night under the hospitable roof

of Herr Hartmann, a Swiss, we moved to a house which that gentleman had hired for us in accordance with a request which we had transmitted to him by telegraph from Mossoul. Our house was situated in a small street close to the bazaar and to the Tigris, and occupied a certain amount of space, but the architect had managed most cleverly to build the least possible number of habitable rooms, and in reality there was only one room for us, which we managed to render very comfortable by means of our rugs and of some hired pieces of furniture. Of course we could not have expected anything more at the low rent which we paid for it; this amounted to two and a half pounds Turkish a month for the whole of the house. Ali deemed it necessary for our dignity and for his own to engage a host of servants, the most active of whom did very little, and the others next to nothing; for which exertions they claimed no pay, but only an occasional *pour-boire*, and they cheated us now and then when sent out on messages.

Our business factotum was a Monsieur Michel. Born in Corsica, he came to Asia in early life, and had picked up a number of languages. He certainly possessed an extraordinary facility for acquiring foreign tongues; and he accomplished what might have been considered an impossibility, for he learnt at Bagdad not only a great deal of German, but also some Russian. The only language which he could not master was Armenian, and he hated it as deeply as he hated the Armenians, his competitors. Some Persian Jews who

interfered with his especial calling—trade in antiquities—were also the objects of his abhorrence. On one occasion he discovered one of them in our rooms, and thereupon followed a theatrical scene of jealousy, during which he bound himself by the most fearful oaths to prove that, since the days of Esther, the various ancestors of this particular Persian Jew were reputed to be false-coiners and forgers of *bric-à-brac*. As this argument did not produce the desired effect—for Monsieur Michel's antiquities were also not free from the suspicion of a modern taint—he had recourse to more practical measures and simply pushed his rival out of the door and down the stairs. Taking him all in all, Michel was the most perfect Dellâl that could be desired; he knew every fine specimen of arms at Bagdad, and he procured us some exquisite carpets and shawls, well worth the price we paid for them. He only failed us in one instance. We had commissioned him to get us photographs of Bagdad, and he had promised to purchase for us a collection which a German, who had recently died in the city, had commenced for his amusement; but it turned out that the inheritance was still under seal, and there was no means of obtaining possession of the desired treasure. The late owner must have been a curious individual. Hailing from Germany, and rejoicing in the name of *Schultze*, he had gone over, not to Islamism, but to Buddhism—and at Bagdad, too, where he had continued to live as a perfect 'character.' A Greek photographer who resided in the city, and who pro-

duced some very good likenesses, did not possess the necessary apparatus for taking landscapes, and we were obliged to leave Bagdad without attaining the object of our wishes.

Our every-day life at Bagdad consisted in a series of wanderings through town and suburbs. The more we strolled *au petit bonheur* in the bazaar, in the streets, and in the gardens along the Tigris, the more we were entertained by new and interesting sights which presented themselves to our gaze. The forenoon was chiefly devoted to a walk in the bazaar, which is not inferior to that of Tabreez; its character, however, differs essentially from that of the latter, on account of the multitude of European articles which are herein exposed for sale. A Swiss firm had even got up a shop in the bazaar, where everything might be had, from the luxurious silks of Lyons down to the German petroleum-lamp and the English razor. All valuable Oriental stuffs were, without exception, of Persian origin, but really fine specimens could only be obtained through the medium of Michel. He accompanied us indefatigably up and down the bazaar, and as each bargain was concluded he would bring together three witnesses—one Mussulman, one Christian, and one Jew. To make any written agreement never entered his head, for the reason that, notwithstanding all his knowledge of languages, calligraphy was still an *ars mistica* to him. The talent of paying Orientals has to be acquired almost as thoroughly as the talent of bargaining. Whatever variety of paper-money the nineteenth century may

have produced in the German petty states is a trifle when compared with the multitude of coins which are current at Bagdad, and which are based on a fictitious rate of exchange of 105 piastres to the Turkish pound. Besides the official Turkish standard there are ancient coins of old, older, and oldest coinage, and of the most diversified value, which represent the most wonderful fractions; and almost every European coin is also accepted at some price or another. The result is that the inexperienced stranger is thoroughly fleeced.

The period of our stay coincided with the end of the Ramazan. Life, which usually in the East begins at sunrise, only commenced late in the afternoon, for the believers, who were only permitted to partake of food and drink during the night-time, were careful to prolong the precious interval as much as possible. As for ourselves, we found a repast in the daytime at an Armenian restaurant in the bazaar, where, making allowance for an Oriental state of affairs, we were perfectly well attended to at a ridiculously low charge. We paid, all three of us together, one pound Turkish a day (about eighteen shillings) for two very plentiful meals, including coffee, dessert, some very palatable Greek wine, and fruit *ad libitum*; and the eagerness displayed by the proprietor to retain our custom proved that he managed to make some money out of us. A dangerous competitor had risen up against him in the person of Janco, a Greek, who had established a kind of hotel; we knew too late of the existence of this place to be able to make use of it, but did not

regret the circumstance, as we were sufficiently comfortable in our house and with our numerous retinue of servants. We never once omitted in the afternoon to take a walk in the beautiful palm-groves at the southern extremity of the city, or to get into one of those circular gondolas and be rowed about on the Tigris. In the latter case the really difficult operation consisted in getting in and out of the bark; the water-line was low, and the banks so swampy that we seldom got into our boat otherwise but on the shoulders of our gondoliers, in return for which service the latter never failed to claim the accustomed backschisch. On the far side of the river, in the suburb, inhabited by the Bedouins of the Angêl tribe, there were coffee-houses situated along the water-side, whence we could follow, whilst sipping a cup of excellent Mocha, the turmoil on the bridge and on the river. The arrangement of these coffee-houses was of the most primitive kind; but the people frequenting them, although consisting exclusively of Arabs of the middle and lower classes, were most polite and unobtrusive in manner. As soon as the sun began to set we ascended the high roof of our house, in order to enjoy the splendour displayed by the departing rays. Although the tints were similar to those which I described during our stay at Mossoul yet the picture was quite a different one. There lay before us the venerable ruins of Nineveh, surrounded by a barren landscape reflecting in full intensity the radiant colours of the evening sky; here the purple and bright yellow rays of the evening sun were broken

by the thousand heads of the palm-trees which adorned the gardens, public places, and streets of Bagdad, and the bright-coloured fleeces which decorate the minarets sparkled brightly in the glow of the setting sun. As soon as the fiery orb had disappeared below the horizon a gun was fired off from the Seraglio of the Pasha—for eleven months in the year the signal for the close of day; in the month of Ramazan, however, this report announces that the hour for eating and drinking has arrived, and the people stream towards the bazaar, the booths of which are brilliantly lit up, to make up for the fast observed in the daytime. The bustle and noise thus keep on increasing, and tranquillity is not restored until the night is far spent. We were wont to pass most of the evenings in the Armenian restaurant, where the greatest animation prevailed. Long rows of bottles ranged on shelves along the walls containing every kind of beverage, not omitting champagne, proved that abstinence is not carried here to extremes. Our favourite drink was some excellent beer exported from Mayence. A Swiss firm has the great merit of having introduced it into the country, where it is rapidly disposed of at ten piastres (about 1*s.* 10*d.*) a bottle. In the garden of the restaurant a Turkish *Pulcinello* (Karagöz) was giving a performance with a magic lantern before hundreds of spectators, and the bazaar swarmed with jugglers and mountebanks. The rest of the city was now quiet and in darkness; and as we returned home, accompanied by our servants carrying lanterns, the silence of night was only now

and then broken by the monotonous cry, 'Jallâh!' of the watchman and by the howling of some dog.

The Bagdad of the present day is situated on the left bank of the Tigris, surrounded on all sides by barren desert, and enclosed by a semicircular wall nearly four miles in length, the towers of which once numbered 160, and which have either tumbled in or are on the point of doing so. The number of inhabitants is estimated at 100,000 souls, but there is room for a still larger population within the town, and the extensive waste spaces along the inner side of the walls show that the city must formerly have contained a still greater number of inhabitants. Two bridges of boats, always teeming with life, span the Tigris. On the right hand lies the suburb inhabited by the Bedouin tribe Agêl, which was summoned hither a great many years ago by the Pasha of Bagdad from its home in Medshed, the north-eastern portion of Central Arabia, to aid in putting down some rebels. This tribe obtained at that time amongst other privileges the monopoly of the camel caravans to Damascus, and it still devotes itself chiefly to the carrier trade. The architectural character of the city is a mixture of Turkish and Persian styles. In the poorer quarters the Persian yellow clay wall predominates; in the neighbourhood of the Tigris there are some very stately buildings, and the houses of Europeans are situated in a street running parallel to the river. The numerous palm-trees which grow not only in the extensive gardens along the Tigris, but in almost every courtyard and wherever

there is a vacant space, afford a pleasant relief to the monotony of narrow and winding streets. The streets are unpaved, and the only public scavengers are the dogs, which are not offensive during the day, but render themselves unbearable during the night by their constant barking and howling.

There only remains at Bagdad, with the exception of a beautifully decorated chimney-piece still extant in a crumbling edifice, and a wall with a lengthy inscription standing in the present Custom-house, one single memorial of Caliph days. This is the tomb of Zobeide, the favourite wife of Haroun-al-Raschid, which is situated at the western extremity of the Agêl suburb, on the edge of the Desert. From a base about thirty feet square rises a pyramidal structure to a height of a hundred feet, executed in a peculiar stalactitic manner. The whole is more curious than beautiful, especially as the former brilliant decorations of the substructure have been destroyed. Even the inscription has suffered so much that scarcely a letter can be distinguished. On going to the tomb we lost our way amongst the narrow, thronged streets of the suburb, and this circumstance led to our becoming witnesses of a strange scene. A wild noise of drums and of singing issued from a court-yard, and on our entering the place we beheld about two dozen negroes, men and women, straining themselves to the utmost in the dance, whilst three coal-black Africans accompanied the performers on huge drums tuned at different deep pitches. The whole of the display must have had a religious signification, for

in the middle of the yard there stood an altar with two flags, and around it some sedate Arabs and Turks sat on stone benches, following the wild performance with the utmost gravity, which seemed to amuse even the dancers, who grinned from ear and ear. We sat ourselves down, and were welcomed in a very polite manner by the negroes and by the spectators; but after a few minutes the infernal noise and the wild dancing of the negroes became too much for us, and we left the place, after giving the usual backschisch.

The city possesses only one important construction of modern times. This is the church belonging to the United Syrian community, and administered by French missionaries; its mighty cupola has only recently been completed. From its roof the best panorama is obtained of the city, of the groves of palm-trees, and of the extensive embattled walls. The churches belonging to other communities are not remarkable, but their number is rather considerable, since no less than six different persuasions are represented, exclusive of the Protestant Church at the English Consulate-General; these are the United Syrian and the Syrian Jacobites, the United Chaldeans and the National Chaldeans (so-called Nestorians), the United Armenians, and the Armenian-Gregorians. The mosques are numerous but unimportant; their minarets, for the most part brilliantly decorated, all incline to one side, like those of Mossoul. The Pasha's Seraglio is a large assemblage of buildings without form; and the palace of the Shah of Persia, which is shown as one of the sights, is nothing

more than a somewhat European-looking country house in the Moorish style. This palace was given to the Shah by the Sultan on the occasion of the former's pilgrimage to Kerbela, when he spent several weeks at Bagdad. There are some large buildings along the Tigris—schools, barracks, and also some manufactories belonging to the State.

The Arabs form the bulk of the population; the agricultural classes of the neighbouring districts belong exclusively to this race, and the Arabs form, too, the great majority among the lower classes of the city. Artisans are recruited chiefly amongst the Syrian and Chaldean Christians; trade is in the hands of Armenians, Persians and Jews, whilst Turks fill all military and civil posts. The more opulent classes among the Arabs are distinguished by a certain refinement of manners and by neat attire. Even the lower orders are here less uncouth and less dirty than in Egypt. Amongst the Bedouins who come to town many a wild-looking fellow may be met with whom civilisation has never reached, and who might as well be living in the days of Mahomed. His dress consists of a long ragged garment, tied round the body by a leather girdle, and sometimes also of a square kind of cloak, the abbâ, which as regards cut is similar to the one worn in Persia; but here the stuff out of which the abbâ is made is a brown-and-white striped material, whilst in Persia it is all of one colour. As head-gear he always wears the blue-and-white checked kefije of English origin, which, owing to its cheapness, has pushed its

way into the heart of Arabia. The national kefije, made of bright striped silk stuffs, embroidered with gold, which stuffs are chiefly woven in the towns of Homs and of Hamah, in Syria, is almost exclusively worn by chieftains and by notables. The town Arab has, however, cast off the popular head-dress which was worn by his nomad ancestors, and wears in its stead the white turban, embroidered with yellow silk, wound round the red fez. I have already mentioned that nothing is more characteristic of the Oriental than the differences which exist in head-dress; at Bagdad, for instance, the Jew is always recognised by his blue and flowery turban and by the huge blue cotton tassel on the fez underneath, whilst the true believer and the Christian wear a black silk tassel; the Syrian and Chaldean Christians wear a black silk turban, unless they adopt the fez without any turban, as worn by Turks and Armenians. Thus everyone's nationality and creed are easily distinguishable at a distance.

No one could venture to assert that the natives of Bagdad are a handsome race; they are all badly built and weakly looking, and generally have a sickly complexion. Foreigners are struck, in the case of Bedouins, by the almost entire absence of beard; whilst other Semitic tribes are characterised by the abundance of hair about the face—a circumstance little known in Europe. I imagined that it was only by pure accident that I chiefly fell in with beardless individuals, but I subsequently learnt, on good authority, that the almost

entire absence of the beard is an unmistakable sign of the Bedouin. Another peculiarity very much disfiguring the native population is the Aleppo knot, which is indigenous not only here but also over a large portion of Western Asia and also of Persia. This disease, which hitherto has remained unaccounted for,[1] generally appears during youth in the case of every native, and takes the form of an abscess on the face, of the size of a hazel-nut. After a certain lapse of time it leaves an ugly, distorted scar, entirely disfiguring the face, which from the first is by no means handsome. Curiously enough the abscess, in the case of Europeans—for after a prolonged residence they are also overtaken by the disease—appears very seldom in the face, but generally on the arms or legs; it is always very painful, but is never accompanied by danger during its course. In connection with this subject I will relate a curious incident which happened during my stay at Bagdad. A European, in order to preserve his face intact, caused himself to be inoculated in the foot with the virus of the disease, but the result was just the opposite of what had been anticipated; for whilst the wound on the foot becamed inflamed and the foot swollen, the Aleppo knot appeared in the most disagreeable part of the face, the upper eyelid. Those who have had the Aleppo knot once need entertain no apprehension of a relapse, since the malady never recurs. The climate of Bagdad, with the exception of

[1] A very detailed paper on the Aleppo knot, written with an intimate knowledge of the subject, is found in Dr. Polak's work on Persia.

an occasional epidemic of cholera and plague, is otherwise not unhealthy, and intermittent fever is said to occur but seldom, owing to the dry condition of the neighbourhood. The heat in summer is quite insupportable, and during the day the whole population takes refuge in the serdâbs, vaulted underground apartments, protected from the sun. In the case of the rich a wet sail fastened to the ceiling is kept in constant motion and cools the atmosphere.

The female population, as far as my experience allowed me to judge, is not less ugly than the male; women belonging to the higher ranks are, it is true, so thickly veiled that their figures cannot be recognised; those who belong to the middle-classes also wear a veil; but although this covering protects them from the sun it does not protect them from inquisitive glances. A square, stiff plait of horsehair, or of some similar material, is suspended from the head-gear, and has constantly to be shifted to the side of the face which requires to be covered, the other side being thus left exposed. The women belonging to Bedouin or Kurd tribes do not wear veils, and females unveiled are frequently met with in the city, especially Turkish women belonging to the lower orders. The keep of a family at Bagdad cannot be very expensive, for young girls employed by Europeans to sort cotton were only receiving one piastre (about twopence) a day. The cheap rate of living has this advantage for the foreigner, that he is less molested by beggars in Bagdad than in other large cities of the East. One beggar, however,

hit upon a very ingenious method to secure a permanent pension from us—he never applied for alms, but laid down at our door, and for hours groaned so fearfully that we had at once to buy off his future reappearance for a fixed stipend, which, by-the-bye, was by no means exorbitant.

The European colony at Bagdad is rather numerous. England is represented by a Consul-General, who, besides a large retinue of servants, has also a guard of Sepoys assigned to him. Owing to the extensive commercial relations existing between Bagdad and Bombay the Consul-General holds his appointment under the Government of India, and not under the Foreign Office. The Consul-General, Col. Herbert, was absent; he had gone as arbitrator to the Turco-Persian frontier in order to settle the disputes constantly arising in consequence of the shifting from one frontier to the other on the part of the nomad tribes. The French Consulate, at that time represented by a Vice-Consul, has not more important interests to watch over than the one at Mossoul; the Italian Consulate—Herr Hartmann, a Swiss, fills the post—had more business to attend to, for a good many Italians carrying on trade reside in these parts. There are at Bagdad several European firms; these deal chiefly in the export of wool, cotton, and other raw material, and they also import the European manufactured articles, amongst which, as in the case of Persia, printed cotton stuffs occupy the first rank. Almost every article of luxury is imported, such as mirrors, lamps, champagne, beer, &c.

Europeans not belonging to the commercial class are not numerous; still they are met with, performing very diverse functions. The little town of Köpenick enjoys the honour of having given to the city Herr Kanthacke, its principal tailor. I had already read in some travelling account of his presence at Bagdad. I surprised him not a little when I addressed him by name in his mother-tongue. In spite of the fez which encircled his brow his physionomy had remained so truly *Berlinerisch* that it could not well be mistaken.

Trade is carried on by Europeans under much easier circumstances at Bagdad than at Tabreez, for the channels of communication are more perfect between the former city and Europe. The Tigris below Bagdad is navigable during the whole year, and steamers run to Basra regularly once a week. From this port they are in fortnightly correspondence with the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers which call at Benderbuschir, in Persia, on their way to Bombay. Steamers frequently sail direct to England from Basra, *viâ* Aden and Suez. Telegraphic communication is by way of Constantinople, but the service seems to be well attended to, for I never heard of any complaints being made, as was the case in Persia. I sent off a telegram to Berlin and received a reply within twenty-four hours. Postal communication is carried on by two routes; the Turkish Government messenger leaves once a fortnight for Constantinople, by way of Mossoul and Aleppo, and the English messenger, an Arab, leaves Bagdad also every fortnight by way of Damascus and Beyrout,

traversing the Desert on camels. The latter line, being considered the safest, is generally resorted to. The postage, it is true, is pretty high, amounting, if I remember rightly, to two piastres (about fourpence) per dirhem (about five grams); but this cannot be regarded as an excessive rate, considering that a special service of carriers has to be maintained for this not very numerous class of correspondents. Letters by both routes occupy from three to four weeks on their journey to Europe.

Bagdad is the capital of the general government of that name, which to the north reaches as far as the Pashalic of Mossoul, to the east touches the Persian frontier, and to the south stretches to the mouth of the united Euphrates and Tigris. To the west the realm of the Sultan only extends to the edge of the Desert, beyond which border the Bedouins still reign supreme as in the days of Mahomed. Midhat Pasha, the late Governor-General, has done a great deal for Bagdad; amongst other institutions which he founded is an industrial school, combined with an orphan asylum, conducted in strictly military fashion, which is so great a desideratum in the East. To him is due the lighting up, by means of petroleum lamps, of the bazaar, of some adjoining streets, and of the bridges. Unfortunately reforms are destined to be shortlived in the East. Midhat Pasha's successor has his head constantly filled with new projects, and the industrial school will soon come to an untimely end. In the case of the petroleum lamps the period of decay

is only made too manifest; the glasses have not been cleaned since Midhat Pasha's departure, and only small streaks of light can penetrate through them. A lamp-lighter being asked by a European why these lamps remained in their dirty condition, replied, with perfect *sang froid*, 'Perhaps you are going to pay for the glass if it gets broken during the cleaning?'

Rauf Pasha succeeded Midhat Pasha. Owing to the favour of the Sultan he had already attained, at the age of forty, the rank of Muschir, the highest grade in the military service. He looked a perfect European, spoke French thoroughly, and, as I learnt on good authority, he stands far above the average of Turkish officials. We paid him a visit, and in return he invited us to attend a great military review to be held on the occasion of the Beiram festival. Accompanied by Herr Hartmann we rode at the appointed time to the parade-ground, and were conducted to a house in which the whole of the official world of Bagdad had already assembled. We met there not only the high civil authorities and some officers but also the religious dignitaries, who sat there gravely sipping their coffee, attired in their robes of office, consisting of a violet gown and white turban, embroidered with gold. Amongst the officers we noticed a Pasha who from his appearance we took to be about from sixty-five to seventy years of age; but we were told that he had fought at the Battle of the Pyramids against Napoleon, and had recently celebrated his hundredth birthday. He was, of course, the object of

general attention, and seemed to be at Bagdad what the nonagenarian Field-Marshal Wrangel is at Berlin. Besides ourselves there were only two foreign guests present, and these were two Bedouin Sheiks; the one was the chief of the mighty tribe of the Montefik on the lower Tigris and on the shores of the Persian Gulf; and the other was one of the four pretenders to the sovereignty of the Neshed, a district of Arabia, formerly quite independent, but now partially under Turkish subjection, and the home of the finest horses and camels. They were both handsome men, but the absence of beard rather detracted from their good looks. The Bedouin dresses, richly embroidered with gold, harmonised well with their bronzed faces and dark eyes.

At the review we were much surprised to witness the unexpected precision with which all the infantry evolutions were carried out. The 6th Turkish Army Corps, which was being paraded before us, although of no greater strength than one of our foot regiments on a peace-footing, represented a goodly appearance, the men being well-clad, well-drilled, and armed with new breech-loaders; and certainly the display greatly impressed the two Bedouin Sheiks, who had been solely invited for that purpose. The cavalry, of the strength of a squadron, did not show to advantage on horseback; and the artillery, represented by three batteries, manœuvred in rather too slack a manner. One of the officers present told me, through our interpreter, that it was a difficult task to produce anything good out

of the Arab population of these districts, for although superior in intelligence to the Turks (as he frankly confessed) these Arabs stand far behind them as regards discipline and bodily dexterity. But I found every soldier whom I met in the streets looking very neat in his becoming uniform, and always well-behaved.

The popular rejoicings in connection with the Beiram festival, which lasted three days, consisted of a universal-holiday kind of promenade before the gates, when everyone who could afford a horse disported himself upon it and raced with others. Viewed from the city walls the spectacle of thousands of people clad in the most various costumes was highly picturesque. The horses were mostly fine animals; still I did not see any very remarkable ones. An erroneous impression is rather prevalent in Europe that the real type of Arab horses resembles that of the grey Barbs which are used in the French light cavalry, and which proved completely unserviceable to us during the late war. But I found that this was by no means the case. Large horses are highly valued in the East; and I saw some finely formed specimens here, with powerful action. Herr Wartmann owned several very beautiful horses. We became thoroughly acquainted during our ride to Ctesiphon with their good qualities: agreeable walk, sagacity, and soft temper, together with great powers of endurance upon scanty food. Europeans are at first inconvenienced by the horses not being able to trot, but this is entirely the result of their training, and does not arise from their peculiar build, as is often

erroneously supposed to be the case in Europe. One of Herr Wartmann's horses, which for a long time had been constantly ridden by a European, had a splendid long trot, which obliged the others to gallop briskly in order to keep pace with it. The finest horses come from the district of the Nesched; but other Arab tribes, as for instance the Anezeh, once so powerful, which occupy the borders of the Arabian Desert, also breed excellent horses. The actual thoroughbreds are expensive; but well-shaped, serviceable horses can be purchased at very moderate prices.

Two important vestiges of ancient times are found in the immediate neighbourhood of Bagdad. To the west, at a distance of some nine miles from the city, stands the Ager Kuf, one of the earliest monuments of Babylonia; and to the south-west, at a distance of twenty-three miles, lie the ruins of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, which, under the Sassanian rule, formed one city, Al Madain. The Ager Kuf, a mound of bricks, is a great shapeless mass, inclining to one side. It may have stood in the same relation to Babylon as Kalah Shergat to Nineveh, but it was probably in a state of decadence when Babylon began to grow in greatness. The Ager Kuf had been visible to us from the road between Kazem and Bagdad, looking like a huge tooth rising out of the desert. We did not, however, devote a day to visit it, owing to the difficulty of access over the swampy fields which surround it. Besides, it offered no object particularly remarkable. Of far greater

interest is the field of ruins comprising the three ancient capitals of the empire. First in order comes Seleucia, which had been built by Seleucus, the successor in these regions to Alexander the Great, on the right bank of the Tigris, and in favour of which Babylon was depopulated; then comes, on the left bank of the river, Ctesiphon, to which the Parthian Arsacides removed the royal residence; the Persian dynasty of the Sassanians, which succeeded the latter dynasty, and which constituted the last protectors of the Ahuramazda, united the two cities under one head, called by the Arabs Al Madain. The Sassanians then constructed on the left bank of the Tigris those magnificent palaces the ruins of which still arouse the wonder of the few travellers who have had the good fortune to see them.

Herr Hartmann was so kind as to lend us his beautiful Arab thoroughbreds for our excursion to the ruins of Ctesiphon, and we left the city long before sunrise, in order to escape as much as possible the heat of the day. A cawass of the Consulate and our Arab servant Hadshi Ramazan accompanied us. The road at first led through groves of palm-trees and across well-irrigated fields along the Tigris to the Dijalah, the most important tributary of the Tigris, the great Zab excepted, and which rises in the south-west of Persia. Its banks show the last traces of cultivation before arriving at the lower Mesopotamian Desert. Here was situated a property of Herr Wartmann, chiefly devoted to the culture of cotton, and where he spends the summer months away from the scorching heat of Bagdad. A

ferry brought us to the opposite bank, where the desert soon begins. The country somewhat resembles a steppe; it was covered with low brushwood, and swarms of crows, pigeons, and desert-hens, of a sandy-yellowish colour, lent animation to the scenery. An occasional jackal, too, might be seen. Our horses went splendidly; before the sun had risen we were already twelve miles on our way, and had reached the banks of the Dijalah, whence a brisk gallop soon brought us to Ctesiphon, the palace of which had been visible at a distance of a great many miles, like a huge rock on the horizon.

I do not wish to assert that the ancient royal seat of the dynasty of the Sassanians—which is now called Tak-i-Kesra by the people—is the grandest single ruin which exists; yet, although cities of ruins, such as Nineveh, Babylon, and Pompeii, may create a more powerful impression by the *ensemble* of their monuments, neither classical antiquity nor the East possesses an edifice which by its gigantic proportions fascinates the eye and strikes the mind with awe in the same degree as Tak-i-Kesra. The palace rises from the midst of the desert at a spot many miles distant from any human habitation. It consists of a massive façade, having four storeys of blind arches superimposed the one on the other, and is over 100 feet in height by 370 feet in width. The interior contains the hall in which the Sassanian kings brought their morning offerings to the sun. The hall is closed in by a parabolical vault resting on walls 20 feet in thickness; its height amounts to 94 feet, its width to 82 feet, and

its depth to 143 feet; thus comprising a space four times as great as that occupied by the celebrated three arches of the Constantine Basilica, at Rome, and, according to some, even a greater space than the entire area of the latter edifice. The remaining portions of the palace are destroyed, but the façade and the hall are still in perfect preservation, save a large rent in the vaulted roof. The building material is composed of bright yellow sun-burnt bricks, the smaller ends being exposed at the vaulted roof. In places are still visible the heads of the beams which probably served to support the scaffolding of the edifice. I am, unfortunately, not in a position to give an illustration of this remarkable ruin, as no photograph of it could be obtained at Bagdad—perhaps none had ever been taken—and as we lost later on a drawing which we had made of it.[1] The masses of ruins around the palace present no special objects of interest. Traces of former walls extend down to the Tigris, and even across the river may be seen remnants of buildings and of fortifications. We spent many hours gazing on this venerable ruin, and only left it when the increasing heat warned us that the hour of departure had approached. Scarcely had we mounted our horses and quitted the spot when a jackal, stealing up, pounced upon the remains of our repast and then made a triumphal exit, carrying off in his mouth the piece of paper which had enveloped our victuals. The animal was probably the only occupant of these ruins,

[1] An illustration of the façade of this palace will be found in Fergusson's 'Illustrated Handbook of Architecture,' vol. i. p. 375.—C. H.

and as the successor of the former rulers considered itself fairly entitled to collect dues. A brisk gallop soon brought us back to the Dijâlah. The man at the ferry would not let us depart until we had taken a few whiffs at his nargilgh. During the last part of our homeward ride the heat was intense; but our horses bore up bravely, although they had not been fed since the previous evening, and we reached our house early in the afternoon. In less than ten hours we accomplished a distance of fifty miles, including two and a half hours' halt—a performance very creditable to our horses.

We were anxious before leaving Bagdad to obtain a closer view of at least the exterior of the splendid mosque at Kázem. We had been earnestly warned against the fanaticism of the inhabitants, and therefore proceeded to work with great caution. A date-merchant had fortunately erected his stall at one of the gates of the outer court. We went to him, and each of us bought dates to the value of a half-piastre. The interval required by him to weigh the dates and by us to put away the lot (a pennyworth) in our pockets amply sufficed to enable us to cast a good glance at the splendid edifice with its proud minarets. The date-merchant seemed fully conscious of this manœuvre on our part, but he was far too much alive to his own interest to interfere with our enjoyment. But no sooner was the last date safely stowed away in the recesses of our pockets than we received unmistakable intimation from the bystanders that we had looked long enough at the hallowed building, and had better take our de-

parture. However incredible it may appear, the fact remains that we were each of us greatly incommoded by the weight of the half-piastre worth of dates. When returning from the mosque we learnt, but too late, that no cars ran along the tramway from here to Bagdad after sunset, and that the last had left five minutes before. As we were asked the absurd price of a pound for a special car we preferred walking back on foot, but the distance to Bagdad seemed to us a very long one.

The last days of our stay at Bagdad were chiefly devoted to making the necessary preparations for our journey through the Desert. We had first to lighten our baggage as much as possible; and, secondly, to lay in a stock of provisions to last us for about three weeks. We obtained some general details concerning our journey from some engineers who, on behalf of the Turkish Government, had travelled over the distance from Tripoli, on the Syrian coast, to Bagdad, by way of Palmyra, when engaged in the preliminary survey of a railway in contemplation along that route. They had, it is true, taken a more northerly course (by way of Dêir, and thence along the Euphrates) than we intended to follow, yet they were able to give us much information respecting the Desert and with regard to the requisites of the journey. Their expedition had not been wholly unaccompanied with adventure. After travelling some days from Palmyra the Turkish military escort which was with them carried off two prisoners and 500 sheep from an Arab tribe on account of arrears of taxes. The next morning they perceived a troop of Bedouins fol-

lowing them, but they were not attacked; and some days later on, when at a considerable distance from the nearest well, they found themselves suddenly hemmed in by superior numbers. All attempts at escape were out of the question in these regions, as they could not separate themselves from the camels which were carrying the water-skins. Fortunately these Arabs were not of a bloodthirsty nature, and allowed them to continue their journey, after having recaptured the two prisoners and the 500 sheep. Bedouins are not always so well-disposed on like occasions; they generally despoil travellers of everything which the latter possess; and not so very long ago two Englishmen returned to Jerusalem from the trans-Jordan districts clad, the one in a copy of the 'Times,' and the other in the supplement of that paper. As regarded the railway, the engineers were of opinion that the absence of water along the road rendered the line utterly impracticable, the only possible route being the one from Aleppo to Diarbekir, and thence along the Tigris to Mossoul and Bagdad.

Negotiations with Abd-ul-Aziz, a camel-driver of the Agêl tribe, had been set on foot immediately after our arrival at Bagdad, through the mediation of Herr Hartmann, but the Ramazan and Beiram festivities had so enervated our new tscherwadar, who at his best was not of a very energetic disposition, that his preparations never seemed to come to an end. We were thus quite unexpectedly compelled to prolong our stay at Bagdad. The delay procured us the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Colonel Herbert, the British

Consul-General, a very amiable man, who had just returned from his excursion to the Persian frontier. He was formerly an officer in the Indian Army, and when referring to the climate of Bagdad spoke of it as being pleasantly cool. I concluded from this that the summer months in the Punjaub, his former residence, must, as regards intense heat, be still more unbearable than at Bagdad. His private residence at the British Consulate-General, the most stately edifice in the city, impressed us very forcibly by its thorough European arrangements; but it made us yearn for home. His house is adorned by a terrace planted over with trees, which overlooks the Tigris, and which affords a charming view of the city and of the groves of palm-trees along the river; it forms the finest spot about Bagdad. Amongst other acquaintances which we made at Bagdad was Dimitraki Aristarchi Bey, private secretary to Rauf Pasha, the Governor-General, a young Greek, educated at Paris, and the same Dimitraki Aristarchi Bey upon whom subsequently the murderous attack was made at Constantinople which created so much sensation in the newspapers. According to his views Bagdad was the most execrable place upon earth, and thrice blessed was the day when the traveller could leave the city never to return. His longing after a change was soon to be realised, for within the next twelve months Rauf Pasha was successively appointed Governor of Yemen, Minister of Police at Constantinople, and Governor-General somewhere in Asia Minor. Since then Rauf Pasha alternated between periods

of disgrace and periods of high favour—a striking instance of the uncertain wisdom which pervades the Turkish Government.

Abd-ul-Aziz at last announced to us that all his preparations were completed, and that we were free to start on the next day. By the written agreement with him, which had been effected through the medium of Herr Wartmann, Abd-ul-Aziz bound himself to convey us safely to Damascus, *viâ* Hillah, Kerbela, and Palmyra, within the space of seventeen days, employing six camels and two guides; and we engaged ourselves, on our part, to pay to him in advance the sum of thirty-two pounds Turkish (about 29*l.*). Abd-ul-Aziz was further to receive an additional consideration of four pounds (3*l.* 14*s.*), subject to our reaching Damascus on the appointed day, but he forfeited that sum if any delay occurred through any fault of his. We hoped that owing to this arrangement his greed for money—a quality which is common to all Arabs—would counterbalance the indolence of his nature. Though these terms may appear moderate, the tscherwadar nevertheless makes a good business out of it. He buys his camels at Bagdad, where they are cheap, on account of the vicinity of the Neshed, and pays from six to seven pounds Turkish (5*l.* 10*s.* to 6*l.* 10*s.*) for each animal. Unless he gets employment for the return journey he disposes of four of the camels, obtaining as much for the four as he originally paid for the whole six at Bagdad. The keep of the camels in the Desert costs him nothing at all, and his own keep costs him

very little, on account of the extreme cheapness of dates; so that when he returns to Bagdad after a journey of about two months' duration he can put by twenty pounds Turkish (18*l.*) net profit—a considerable sum for the state of affairs in these regions. Against this profit should be set the possible risk of losing one of the camels by some cause or other. Arabs who belong to the Ayêl tribe have nothing to fear from plundering expeditions, for this tribe entertains amicable relations with the other tribes of the Desert, especially with the powerful Anezehs. The European is, therefore, much safer when travelling with the Ayêl Arab than when accompanied with the strongest of escorts; and we felt heartily glad that we could afford to decline the armed escort which Rauf Pasha offered us. We had suffered enough annoyance during our journey on account of escorts.

The camels which are used for travelling in the Desert are dromedaries, with one hump. Orientals do not distinguish in the same manner between different kinds of camels as we are taught to do in our school-books, wherein the camel with one hump is exclusively called dromedary; their one-humped camels are of two kinds: heavily built beasts of burthen and finely shaped animals for riding purposes, and it is only to the latter species that Europeans in the East apply the name dromedary. The difference between these two descriptions is pretty much the same as that which exists between a pack-horse and a saddle-horse. The camel with two humps, which comes from Bactria, is but

seldom to be met with in Persia and, as I have been told, never is seen about Bagdad. It is only useful as a beast of burthen, and is totally unsuited for a rapid journey. Nor is the dromedary the speedy animal which it is often supposed to be. A very fine breed of dromedaries is said to exist which are able to accomplish long distances trotting, but I have never seen any of these and they are, probably, only to be found in the possession of native princes and Sheiks—the Viceroy of Egypt, for instance. The really valuable qualities of the dromedary are its great powers of endurance and its almost incredible powers of abstinence. Our camels, which were of a very ordinary kind, accomplished in an hour exactly 4,800 metres (2 miles, 7 furlongs, 189 yards) at a pace which never varied, and our progress during a twelve hours' march amounted consequently to nearly 36 miles. Halts were only made to take in water, but it often happened that we performed a twelve hours' march without the camels resting even for one moment. A three weeks' journey accomplished in this manner, with two forced marches of double the length towards the end, proved to be by no means beyond the power of our camels, and only one of them, which at the beginning of the journey betrayed signs of weakness, had to be left behind the last day close to Damascus. Each camel started with 2 cwt. of baggage, exclusive of rider and saddle; this weight was gradually reduced to 1 cwt. during the course of the journey, owing to the consumption of provisions.

The powers of abstinence displayed by the camels was truly remarkable. Their daily food consisted of a kind of long bramble which grew in every part of the Desert, and which was so dry that it served admirably for fuel. They grazed for about two hours every evening on this scanty food, and then returned satisfied to the tent; after a very fatiguing march or at a spot where the brambles were scarce, one or two flour-dumplings of the size of a man's fist were stuffed down their throats. This proceeding was always a very comical sight, for the camels, lying round in a circle, used all to stretch out their necks as far as possible in order to be helped first. Every second or third day they manifested a desire for water, and then a few mouthfuls sufficed to quench their thirst; on one occasion five days elapsed without their getting one drop of water, yet they did not seem to experience any great inconvenience. The temperature was, it is true, very cool, and a rich dew fell in the morning. During the hot summer months the necessity for water is probably more pressing.

The trappings worn by the camels are of the simplest description. There is no such thing as a bridle; some camels carry a halter, but as for guiding them by it that is quite out of the question, for the camel has a very distinct will of its own. The only way to direct them is by slight strokes with a stick applied on the neck, and this only serves to make them go on one side. The impossibility of guiding the camel is no great drawback, for camels remain close together of their own accord, and keep in the original

direction without deviating from it. The saddle is a kind of pillion, the side-pieces of which are simply formed of two thin pieces of wood; it is attached by two girths in such a way as to rest straight on the hump. In the case of camels which work hard and are scantily fed the hump protrudes slightly. The fore-girth is fastened round the hollow between the fore-legs and the chest, which stands out like a fowl's breast, and the hind-girth is fastened between the equally deep hollow of the belly and the hind-legs. By this method the saddle rests very firmly, especially as the hump prevents it from slipping on one side. The saddle is never taken off the camel's back, which the animal does not seem to mind, having always been accustomed to it. The baggage is divided into large sacks, which are then attached to the fore and after part of the saddle in such a manner as to preserve the most perfect balance; the surface formed by the top of the saddle and by the upper parts of the packing-sacks is then by means of carpets and of cushions comfortably arranged as a seat for the traveller.

No art of riding is applicable to the camel. All that the traveller can do is to mount and dismount as safely as possible, and to avoid tumbling off the camel's back when once seated there. Some skill is required to mount on the animal's back. The camel goes down on its knees at a sign from the driver (generally a gurgling sound), with a stroke on the neck or on the knee, and the rider gets on the saddle from the ground; but scarcely has he crossed his legs than he must be

careful to sit firm, for camels have the annoying habit of getting up as soon as they feel the rider in the saddle, and the inexperienced are generally precipitated in a wide curve over the camel's neck. The animal performs three movements when getting up; it first rises in front on its knees, it then jumps up all at once with the hinder parts (the critical moment for the rider), and finally rises altogether in front. With some dexterity it is possible to get into the saddle whilst the camel is in a standing position; to do this the rider must swing himself on to the camel's neck; the muscles of the neck are remarkably strong, and I have seen one of our animals carrying on its neck for a good distance a rider some 15 stone in weight. In order to dismount the rider either makes the camel go down on its knees or he slowly lets himself down the side. The motion is not so unpleasant as it is imagined, and personally I never experienced the feeling of sea-sickness or the pain of aching joints which it is said to produce. The rider is far less confined in his movements on the comfortable saddle than on horseback, and by constantly changing his position, and by crossing his legs to one side, he can easily obviate fatigue. The continuous balancing of the upper part of the camel's body is certainly very trying to the rider; this is the result of the drawling movement of the animal, and there is no remedy against it. If the joints do not suffer from the journey on the back of the camel, the nerves are less fortunate as regards the effect produced. Apart from the dreary and monotonous nature of the surrounding

scenery, which of itself is very depressing, the camel possesses two peculiarities which are enough to drive the most placid of men to despair. The first is its inexpressibly stupid look, and the other its unpleasant cry. I frankly own that I always got very irritated when the camel which I rode slowly turned round its long neck towards me and, without stopping, used to stare at me with its vacant goggle-eyes. Its other defect is still worse: whenever it is being laden or being mounted, and also on other occasions when a disposition to do so seizes it, the camel breaks out into its peculiar piercing cry, which is immediately taken up by all the other camels. The sound resembles the deep grunting of pigs; the shrill blast, however, is like the roaring of the lion; and when a whole caravan is being laden it becomes quite insupportable. These defects literally made us loath the sight of the animals, and we were quite overcome with disgust each time that we had to mount them; and at Damascus we felt quite relieved of a heavy load when we descended from their backs for the last time.

On Sunday, December 8, after having paid our farewell visits, and after having enjoyed a substantial breakfast in the Armenian restaurant, we resumed our journey. As is usual in the East, a great many hours had been wasted before any actual start was made, and it was 2 P.M. before we could mount our camels. The first stage of the route was very much the reverse of pleasant. Abd-ul-Aziz had provided camels of a most ordinary description, and had omitted to give them the

necessary amount of exercise on the previous day, so that after a long rest they were quite drowsy, and frequently tried to lie down. Moreover the baggage had been badly fastened and the saddles were not properly fixed. Added to these discomforts a drizzly rain which had fallen the previous day had rendered the road quite slippery—the most uncomfortable state of things for a journey on camels, as these animals are not sure-footed with their flat hoofs. Thus everything seemed to conspire against us. Orientals would, doubtless, have regarded these *contre-temps* in the light of a bad omen, and would have at once turned back; we, however, insisted on continuing our route, in spite of the dulness of the journey and the entreaties of Abd-ul-Aziz, who wanted to come to a halt. He had undertaken on the previous day to convey us to the caravansarai of Iskenderîje, half-way to Hillah, as the first day's march, and we were determined to keep him to his word; we knew from experience what bad policy it is when dealing with Orientals to give way in anything. Moreover, Abd-ul-Aziz had, unfortunately for himself, displeased us from the first; for in addition to the bad qualities possessed by our former tscherwadars, such as untrustworthiness, deceit, and indolence, he was endowed with another defect, for which he certainly was not responsible, but which was not the less irritating to us, namely, a most unwelcome physiognomy. Daud, the second guide, also of the tribe of the Ayêl, was a very different sort of a fellow. Whilst Abd-ul-Aziz was not only stamped with the

Bagdad type, but also possessed the effeminate kind of accent peculiar to natives of Bagdad, Daud was a true Bedouin, and his deep guttural tones, sounding so strangely to European ears, had something sonorous about them. He was, besides, quiet, intelligent, and well-behaved, and we wished that we had taken him as our principal tscherwadar. As both the guides only spoke Arabic our conversations with them were not very lively; yet we managed to make ourselves understood by means of a pocket-dictionary.

The road from Bagdad to Hillah runs due south, the distance amounting to seventy miles. As the pilgrims visiting the sacred shrines of the Sheeites proceed by this route the road does not lack animation, and the caravansaries are numerous. The traveller stumbles everywhere upon traces of ancient culture, in the shape of immense canals which in bygone days connected the Euphrates with the Tigris, and which rendered Mesopotamia one of the most fertile countries of the earth. These canals are now dried up, and their dykes extend along the flat country, resembling low chains of hills. Owing to the delay in starting it was late at night before we reached the caravansarai of Iskenderije, and I may fairly say that the whole party, camels included, was in the worst of tempers. The caravansarai, too, was so dirty and uncomfortable that after a few hours' rest we felt heartily glad to leave it. Two roads branch off at this point: the road to Hillah, which continues its course in a southerly direction, and another road which runs to the south-west, crossing the

Euphrates near Mussejib, and then leading on to Kerbela. We followed the first road, and in the course of the afternoon reached the caravansarai of Mohawil, the last stage before Hillah. The character of the scenery remained unchanged, and nothing could be seen of the Euphrates and of its forests of palm-trees. As we had calculated upon reaching Iskenderije in good time, and upon starting the next morning in good time for Mohawil, we had requested Herr Hartmann to kindly telegraph to Hillah and order horses to be sent and meet us at Mohawil, so as to enable us to visit comfortably the ruins along the road, which excursions we could not possibly have made on our camels. But we found it impossible to carry out our plan, and nothing remained for us to do but to try and reach Hillah before night set in. The telegram had been very literally interpreted at Hillah. The horses were sent, but without either saddles or bridles, and our own saddles lay packed up at Bagdad ready to be forwarded from there to Europe. Although our immediate object had been frustrated we nevertheless mounted the horses. The handsome little steeds were manageable with a halter, and they went at such a comfortable pace that we scarcely missed the saddles. After an hour's ride we sighted the first ruins of Babylon; they resembled the mounds of ruins at Nineveh, but were loftier. To the right rose the Mujelibê, at one time a fort protecting the ancient capital on the north side. We then discovered that even had we arrived in time we should not have been able to visit the Mujelibê, as a very deep

canal separated it from the road. Darkness coming on prevented us from obtaining a view of the other roads, but we were still able to see how the ground was strewed over with potsherds, the most lasting remains of ancient times; for whilst palaces and temples built of stone have been swept away by the elements, these fragments of domestic utensils have endured thousands of years. At last we reached the Euphrates and the groves of palm-trees, and we soon stood before the gates of Hillah, where multitudes of jackals were busy devouring the cast-away offal from the butchers' booths. These animals, which are never molested, take very little notice at night of human beings, and scarcely ever get out of the way of passers-by. We crossed a bridge of boats, which, owing to the enlightened administration of Midhat Pasha, is provided with petroleum lamps, and we then entered the town of Hillah, situated on the left bank of the Euphrates. On alighting at the caravansarai we were received by Herr Hartmann's agent, an Arab, who to our great surprise addressed us in French as follows: 'Bonjour, Messieurs, comment vous portez-vous?' We were quite delighted to find some one with whom we could carry on conversation; but we were soon to discover, to our disappointment, that the French sentence with which this gentleman had addressed us represented his entire knowledge of that language; for with the same phrase he greeted us on our arrival, wished us good night, and on the following day good morning, and finally good-bye. The camels and our baggage arrived soon after us. We re-

tired early to rest, so as to make up for the want of repose on the preceding evening.

The ruins of Babylon cover an immense open field. The assertion of Herodotus that the city forms a square of 120 stadia (about twelve miles) has been proved by recent investigations to be by no means exaggerated. Such an area, says Ritter, would be perfectly incredible if connected with the notions of a European city, the houses of which are next to one another; but here, at Babylon, it simply meant an extensive superficies comprising the royal residence, a large city of temples, a mariners' quarter, groves of palm-trees, gardens, and arable land, and so vast an area that when Cyrus captured the city the Babylonians, who dwelt in the centre of it, held their festival unconcernedly whilst the outskirts were already occupied by the Persians. The general character of Babylon, therefore, resembled that of Nineveh. Very different, however, was the manner in which both cities fell from their grandeur. Nineveh was taken by storm by the Babylonians and Medes, the royal palace was burnt down, and the city was violently depopulated by the conquerors; whilst Babylon, after the death of Alexander the Great, gradually declined, owing to the neighbourhood of Seleucia, the prosperity of which little by little drew away the population from the former city. At Babylon, too, the explorer has found far fewer remnants of ancient times than at Nineveh, inasmuch as the inhabitants of the former city had, during the period of migration,

plenty of time to carry away with them everything that was of value.

The Euphrates traversed the city in a diagonal line from north-west to south-east; on its left bank were situated the northern fort, which was meant to cover the king's palace, the palace itself, and the hanging gardens; and on the right bank there was another palace, occupied by Alexander the Great until, shortly before his death, he caused himself to be removed to the palace on the left bank. On the southern confines of the city rose the most venerable monument of ancient times—the Tower of Babel. All these edifices, with the exception of the palace, which formerly stood on the right bank of the Euphrates, can, from their remains, be traced with certainty, although there is no question of any preservation of ruins, as in the case of Nineveh. The particular kind of brick which served as the building material has been pretty well preserved in masses, but it was not able to preserve, through the lapse of centuries, the architectural forms of the buildings. This material also lacked the protecting cover of sand from the Desert to which Nineveh owes its good state of preservation. Apart from the edifices mentioned above, the city offers nothing but a wide field of ruins, strewed over with fragments; and on its confines the line of outward walls can scarcely be traced. The king's palace also possessed, like the palace-mound of Kouyunjik, a separate double enclosure, which is almost as well preserved as that of Kouyunjik. To the eastward, outside of the actual city, many a group of ruins

may still be found; but to the westward, where lay the large artificial lakes which regulated the system of canalisation, the nature of the country has, in the course of centuries, undergone a complete change; the branch of the Euphrates which fed those lakes has apparently altered its course several times, and it is now impossible to trace anything whatsoever with any approach to certainty.

We intended to devote the next day (December 10) to an excursion to the ruins, and we fixed our start for 9 A.M. The good little horses on which we had journeyed from Mohawil to Hillah appeared at the appointed hour, but the attendant had neglected, despite our distinct order, to provide them with saddles and bridles; he gave as an excuse that he had been unable to obtain any, which pretext seemed rather incredible in the case of a town with 10,000 inhabitants. Not to lose any time, we mounted our steeds as they were and, crossing the crowded bazaar, rode in the direction of the Birs Nimroud (Tower of Babel), situated to the south-west of the town. Hillah produced upon us the same pleasing impressions as Kazem; it lies hidden away in the midst of groves of palm-trees, and is full of animation; for not only do the large caravans of pilgrims pass this way on their road to Kerbela and to Meschhed Ali, but an important traffic takes place through Hillah between the countries of the lower Euphrates and Central Arabia. The whole neighbourhood is plentifully supplied with water, both by the principal stream of the Euphrates and by its western branch, which

latter diverges some miles to the north of Hillah, and forms to the west of the town a large lake with shifting shores; its surface seemed to have quite recently extended as far as the road, for in places the soil was still soft and swampy. Owing to the abundance of water the cultivation of the soil is good, and we saw extensive fields, neatly tilled, intersected by regular canals. The distance in a straight line from Hillah to the Birs Nimroud is little over five miles, but the soaked condition of the ground obliged us to follow a very roundabout way, and it took us a two hours' ride to reach the latter place. As seen from afar off the Birs Nimroud bore a striking resemblance to the ruins of Starkemburg, in Hesse. On a broad mound surmounted by a pyramid, with flattened summit, stand the remains of a lofty tower. On approaching, we recognised distinctly the forms of the Babylonian tower as described by Strabo and Herodotus. The basement consists of a rectangle, some 2,000 feet in circumference, and upon it rises up the mighty mass in the shape of terraces, which diminish in dimensions as they rise. A wide spiral projection runs up along it, probably having formed the way leading to the summit. The two first terraces, or platforms, are almost in a perfect state of preservation; the third platform, the highest surface of which is at an elevation of 200 feet above the plain, consists solely of a confused mass of stone, on the summit of which stands, bastion-like, a fragment of the walls of the fourth platform, forty feet in height. The ruins of the remaining platforms

lie scattered about in irregular clumps of walls. The building material consists of the imperishable sun-dried brick of the ancient Babylonians, asphalte having served as mortar; each brick, about one square foot in size, and about four inches in depth, bears imprinted on its lower surface a cuneiform inscription of several lines, which gives the name of the builder. Near to the summit lie large fragments of walls, formerly supporting the temple which stood upon the tower. The burning of the tower at the time of its capture by Cyrus melted the asphalte mortar, and the entire mass, pervaded by that substance, has a crizzly, vitreous appearance. Still mighty in its ruins, the colossal pile stands there towering above the extensive plain on which once stood the largest city in the world.

We dismounted at the base of the mound and ascended to the summit. The view which we obtained from there surpassed our boldest expectations. To the west was the blue surface of the lake formed by the Euphrates, the waters of which almost touched the base of the mound, and which was enlivened by a number of white sails and by swarms of huge pelicans. No map makes mention of this lake, which extends from north to south as far as the eye can reach; it may be that sometimes it disappears altogether, owing to the changing condition of the waters. The unusual sight of this wide expanse of blue water possessed an inexpressible charm, and the perfect calm of the morning lent a solemn tone to the picture. To the south lay the village of Kefil, the resting-place of the Prophet

Ezekiel, and held in high reverence by the Jews; and beyond it in the far distance we thought we could discern the glitter of the gilded cupola of Meschhed Ali. This latter surmounts the tomb of Ali, and is situated close to the ancient Kufa—now an unimportant place—where Mohamed's son-in-law met his death at the hand of a murderer. To the north rose beneath our feet another mound of ruins, of inconsiderable elevation but of great extent; upon it stood once the Pandemonium of the ancient Babylonians, whilst now it only contains some plain tombs of Mahomedan saints. The background was formed by groves of palm-trees, which concealed from view the town of Hillah and the ruins on the opposite bank of the Euphrates.

We lingered long on the summit of the Birs Nimroud, and—prosaically enough—drank there in silent sorrow our last bottle of Bagdad beer. It may, perhaps, interest the brewer, Herr Rautert of Mayence, to know that his products reached as far as the top of the Tower of Babel. Returning to Hillah we took a brisk gallop. The absence of saddle and bridle (a halter sufficed for leading the horses) caused us to become intimately acquainted with the soft soil of numerous ditches. The horses showed on these occasions their gentle disposition—no sooner had the rider fallen off than his steed remained quietly standing near him until he had remounted. We dined at Hillah, and immediately after set off for the ruins on the opposite bank. We followed at first the old Bagdad road up to the point where it turns off from the Euphrates,

and thus keeping close to the river, we reached in a few minutes, the Kasr, a square mound of ruins about the circumference of the Birs Nimroud, but of far less elevation. The palace of Nebuchadnezzar formerly stood upon it—the same palace in which Alexander the Great died. The remains consist of single pillars and of portions of walls, most of the material having been carried off from there to Hillah for building purposes. The Euphrates, which once flowed past the palace, has removed its bed further west, and now runs some 200 yards away from it. The volume of water is much diminished, owing to the western branch and the many canals, and the Euphrates with its narrow surface will not bear comparison with the stately Tigris. Yet there is some kind of navigation on its waters, which is chiefly carried on by means of long slender Arab boats, and a steamer occasionally ascends the stream as far as Balis, near Aleppo; but no regular steam navigation is practicable on this river beyond Hillah, owing to the constantly changing condition of its waters. I could not discover any trace of the willows under which the captive Jews are said to have wept over Jerusalem; now and then might be seen a grove of palm-trees near some huts, and on the Kasr stands, as last and living monument of bygone times, a solitary tamarind-tree, of great antiquity—the only one, according to the Mahomedan legend, which was spared at the time of the destruction of Babylon, in order that Ali, the rightful Caliph, might fasten his horse to it after the lost battle.

An extensive field of ruins surrounds the Kasr. Close to the mound extends a double line of walls, which, as in the case of Nineveh, served as a special protection for the palace of the king; and between these lines rose lower mounds, upon which smaller palaces may have stood. One of these mounds, of a bright red colour, has this peculiarity, that the bricks bear the cuneiform inscription on the small end. To the north, at about two miles' distance, rises the Mujelibê, a square mass, of the circumference of the Kasr, and some hundred feet in height. Numerous subterranean passages are said to traverse it, and coffins and valuable relics have been found there in vaults. This mound was formerly held to be the Tower of Babel, but authorities are now agreed that it was a citadel, the high walls of which were better able to resist attack than the less elevated ones of the Kasr. A tradition is still preserved amongst the natives that the Mujelibê is the actual tower, and it is, therefore, generally called the 'Babel.' We could not afford sufficient time for a visit to this mound, and we were obliged to rest satisfied with a distant view of it. Whilst we stood on the Kasr gazing on the landscape, lit up by the rays of the setting sun, a stream of people came towards us from a little village on the Euphrates to offer to us for sale antiquities of Babylonian times. These relics were undoubtedly genuine, for they could not have been manufactured for the price at which they were offered to us. Amongst other things I purchased for a few piastres a small sitting statuette, in terra-cotta, of

exquisite execution, and bearing traces of having formerly been painted. The setting sun reminded us that it was time to think of returning to Hillah; we remounted our horses and rode back by way of the Amran-ibn-Ali, a mound lying south of the Kasr, and divided from it by a ravine; this mound is so called after the tomb of a son of Ali, the rightful Caliph. The hanging gardens of Semiramis were situated on this mound; but now the place is barren and desolate. When at school I never could understand why the hanging gardens were considered to be one of the wonders of the world; but here it became clear to me. In a country where artificial irrigation is alone able to keep alive the vegetable kingdom it must have appeared supernatural that a garden, situated high above the river, should not perish. The fame of the hanging gardens spread far and wide, and, magnified tenfold, it reached the Greeks, who thus included amongst the seven wonders of the world a phenomenon which, in many countries, is of every-day occurrence. At a short distance from the mound we regained the high road, and a brisk gallop, this time unaccompanied with mishaps, soon brought us back to Hillah.

It had been part of our original plan to visit, on the way to Hillah, the ruins on the left bank of the Euphrates, and, on the following day, when returning from the Birs Nimroud, to resume our journey to Kerbela. This project having failed we wished to make up for lost time and to proceed some miles that same evening, so as to be able to reach Kerbela in good time

the next day. The ample rest which we enjoyed at Bagdad had so refreshed us that we had nothing to fear from a night's ride, and the camels had had full opportunity at Hillah to refresh themselves. Besides, there was a splendid moonlight, and the way was easy to find. A little surprise was in store for us just before starting. A venerable Arab, with a white beard, came up and addressed me in Russian—the last language which I should have expected to hear spoken amidst the ruins of Babylon. It turned out that he was a Persian, who had lived all his life in Arabia, but who as a youth had been at Astrachan, where he had picked up a little Russian. He seemed very proud of his knowledge of that language, and did not rest until he had delivered himself of his entire Russian vocabulary. We started about 7 P.M., and shortly after midnight reached, near the large village of Hindije, the western branch of the Euphrates, which appeared to us broader than the principal stream. We had been made aware for some time of its vicinity, for its waters had converted the district into a swampy region, over which the camels had great difficulty in getting along. Near the point where the river widens to form the lake which we had seen from the Birs Nimroud, was situated, according to our guides, a Fort Tore-itsch, the name of which, for some reason of which I am ignorant, they were always mentioning; but nothing was to be seen of it. At Hindije we pitched our tent on the opposite bank of the river, which we crossed by means of a long bridge of boats. There did exist, it is true,

a caravansarai, but after our experiences of Iskenderîje and Hillah we preferred camping out under canvas.

The gilded cupolas of Kerbela seemed quite near when we resumed our journey the following morning; yet it was past mid-day before we reached that town. Our camels could not be made to quicken their slow pace, and with envy we beheld one caravan after another of fleet donkeys passing us and hurrying onwards. The first view of Kerbela is scarcely inferior to that of Kazem. Here, too, were extensive groves of palm-trees, gilded cupolas, and minarets; and the surrounding scenery was most picturesque. About a thousand years ago the place was a desert, entirely without water. Here it was that Hassan and Hüssên, the sons of Ali, were surrounded by the army of the Caliph Moawijah, under the command of Jezid, and that after their last followers had died of thirst they were captured and put to death. Splendid mosques have been erected over their tombs, of which that of Hüssên seems to be considered as the most sacred. The town of Kerbela is commonly called Meschhed Hüssên, and canals, which have conveyed hither the waters of the Euphrates, have transformed the spot into a luxuriant garden of palm-trees. The countless caravans of Sheeite pilgrims gave the first impetus to the foundation of a prosperous town, with an extensive bazaar, and with numerous caravansaries, always filled with pilgrims and merchants; for Kerbela is considered the most sacred shrine after Mecca, and every pilgrim who has visited it adds to his name the prefix of Kerbelai, just

in the same manner as the Mecca pilgrims assume the title of Hadshi. It is rather a remarkable circumstance that the resting-place of Ali at Meschhed Ali, situated at a distance of two days' journey from Kerbela, should be quite as sacred as the resting-place of Hüssên, but that it should not confer a title. The title of Meschhed, which is of frequent occurrence in Persia, takes its origin in Medschhed in Khorassan. Meschhed Ali is the great death-field of the Persians. The remains of thousands are conveyed by caravans to be buried in that sacred place, and the nearer the tomb lies to the mosque the higher is the price to be paid for the grave; and this sale forms a source of great revenue to the priests. The transport of dead bodies is a great evil from a sanitary point of view. The imperfect closing of the coffins frequently causes miasma, and hence epidemics which sweep away whole caravans.

We had been warned at Bagdad against the fanaticism of the Kerbela populace, and consequently made no attempt to approach the two mosques, especially as we had a good view of these noble structures from the roof of our caravansarai. Nor had we to complain of the conduct of the natives towards us; we found them very well-disposed and even obliging. Our servant Ali, being a Sheeite, went to pay a visit to the tomb of Hüssên, and during his absence we completed our stock of provisions for the journey through the Desert, which was now to commence in earnest. We laid in a large stock of oranges, so refreshing on hot days, and we also

purchased a supply of spirit made of dates, which we bought of an old Jew; an Arab, who had picked up a little French, acting as interpreter. This spirit, praised by Xenophon, is a very strong brandy, clean to the taste and resembling arrack. If we might judge by the large quantity kept in stock in big jugs by the Jew it must enjoy high favour with the people of Kerbela, and it certainly proved to us, later on, a very welcome drink during the cold mornings in the Desert. It is called here Mastik; which name, however, is given at Constantinople and in the Levant to a very different kind of beverage. Ali returned in great glee from his pilgrimage. He told us that the mosque was all gold within, and that he could not resist making an offering of a meschidje (about three shillings and fourpence) out of our travelling fund, which we declared to be an act of great piety. In future we always styled him Kerbelai Ali, which seemed to please him greatly. Our night's rest was fated to be disturbed. Our quarters consisted of an open hall leading into the courtyard of the caravansarai, and during the night we had constant incursions of donkeys which were enclosed in the courtyard, and the greater portion of our time was occupied in repelling the intruders.

On December 12 we entered the Desert. At a distance of a hundred yards from the caravansarai a slight rising of the ground was perceptible, which kept back the fertilising waters and cut off at once every trace of vegetation. The soil, for a district of nine miles in width, consisted of a layer of sand, one foot deep, on a

substratum of clay. This, by-the-bye, was the only tract of sand which we traversed between the Euphrates and the Anti-Lebanon. The way was marked out by large heaps of stones, and at a good day's journey lay the large and fertile oasis of Al Tschiddr, whence a road leads into the interior of Arabia. The natives whom we met carried the small national club made of palm-wood, about three feet in length, armed with a knob of asphalte of the size of a man's fist—a weapon as handy as it is cheap, for here in the land of palms and of asphalte it can scarcely cost anything. We had already been made aware at Bagdad that this weapon is a dangerous one, as the many people who are murdered —and their number is not inconsiderable—have their brains knocked out by this small club. We slowly ascended until noon an undulating terrain, and then had to traverse a deep valley, through which formerly had flowed a branch of the Euphrates, now lying dry. According to the map this branch rose some 140 miles above Hillah, and emptied itself into the lakes and swamps near Meschhed Ali. Afterwards followed further dreary and undulating country, and the rocky soil was overgrown with that kind of briar which in the Desert forms the only element of subsistence for the camel. After an eight hours' ride we pitched our tent.

In order to avoid as much as possible the heat of the day we had planned a start during the night. We expected by this means to be able to reach the oasis of Al Tschiddr before daybreak, and to get over a good

portion of the Desert beyond it. But our zeal had carried us away, for as we were on the point of reaching the borders of the oasis the moon went down, and the dampness of the soil, which seemed to have been just inundated for purposes of fertilisation, and over which our camels, owing to the extreme darkness, strode with very uncertain step, rendered it impossible to penetrate safely the dense and pathless palm-wood. We were obliged to dismount and to wait until sunrise, and we lay down shivering with cold on the wet ground between our camels. The two hours which followed seemed to us an eternity, and the atmosphere was bitterly cold. At last the dawn appeared, and we entered the oasis. A large village, the huts of which looked by no means so miserable as we had expected, lay close to the borders; it even contained two-storey houses, with balconies and terraces, but constructed of clay in such a manner as is only possible in a region so destitute of rain. Unfortunately, our Arabs omitted to take an experienced guide from here to lead us through the oasis, and this neglect caused many mishaps. We at first followed a narrow path leading through the palm-trees; the trees stood so close together that we were continually obliged to push aside the fans which flapped in our faces. All went pretty well at first, but gradually the path became so wet that the camels kept constantly slipping with their broad, flat hoofs. No long interval elapsed before the first camel came down in the swamp with the rider and baggage, and the same bad luck befell the others. Instead of at once

returning to the village in order to fetch a guide our Arabs hit upon the unfortunate expedient of trying to force their way through the wood in an oblique line; the result was that we speedily found ourselves lost in a labyrinth of palm-trees, streamlets, and swamps from which there seemed no outlet. Riding was out of the question; the camels had become obstinate, and would neither go backwards nor forwards, so that we had to provide ourselves with fans from the palm-trees, and to organise ourselves into a regular band of camel-drivers. We had besides the satisfaction of having to carry all kinds of baggage, which had got loose in consequence of the animals tumbling to and fro, and which kept falling off at every moment. I shall not easily forget the hours which we spent in extricating our camels from the swamp, and in getting them back to dry land; and the hateful brutes drove us half-mad with their stubbornness and their abominable cries. When we at last reached some kind of a path we felt utterly exhausted. This path brought us to a large village, Schethate, which Ritter frequently mentions under the name of Schiltat. Here we halted to rest ourselves and to put our baggage in order, which latter had sadly suffered during the journey; fortunately neither tent nor provisions, the most important item, had been injured in any way.

The spot where we rested was most beautiful, but we were not in a frame of mind to appreciate its beauties. We stood at the edge of a source, the basin of which was about 180 feet in length by 120 feet in

width, and the waters of which were azure-blue, so clear that we could distinctly see the rocky bed forty feet below the surface. The water was sulphurous, twenty-five degrees of heat Centigrade, and it burst out of the ground in such quantities that two strong currents, each about twelve feet broad, flowed out of the basin. These streams fertilise the whole of the oasis, and it seems that the sulphurous qualities of the water are particularly favourable to palm-trees, for the dates from the oasis of Al Tschidr are famous for their excellency. Our Arabs laid in a good stock for consumption in the Desert. The palm-trees inclined their fans over the basin as if attracted by the blue waters, and thus formed the most tropical picture which I have seen on my journey. Whilst taking our rest here the scene was suddenly enlivened by the approach of a splendid cavalcade. A chief of the district of Hedshas, in Central Arabia, was passing along, followed by a large retinue, on his way to Kerbela. Never have I seen wilder-looking figures than those of the Bedouins with bronzed faces which followed him, armed with heavy silver-mounted muskets, apparently of Indian origin; there were also many jet-black negro faces amongst the retinue, negroes being numerous in Southern Arabia. Notwithstanding this beautiful and picturesque spectacle we felt truly glad when our little caravan issued from the palm-groves and when our camels once more trod the hard soil of the Desert. A mighty ruin rose on our left at some little distance from the oasis, but it looked in such a crumbling con-

dition that we did not think it worthy of a visit; and to our right, in the far distance, we thought we could discern large lakes or swamps. We continued to ride for some hours in a north-westerly direction, and we then pitched our tent on a rocky soil close to some ruined mausoleums. At about four miles north-north-east from our encampment were the palm-groves of the oasis of Rahallîje; but we had had enough of one oasis, and we felt by no means anxious to try another one.

There now followed a thirteen days' march through the dreary Desert. During the two first days we kept in the vicinity of the Euphrates, which flowed at a distance of several miles along our route. The neighbourhood of the river could be easily recognised by the moist nature of the soil and by the increased amount of vegetation. After that we trended westward, and, traversing the country in an oblique line, rode on in the direction of Palmyra. The terrain gradually rises from the Euphrates to Syria. The gradients in a distance of 370 miles in a straight line amounted to 2,000 feet. The incline is scarcely perceptible on the journey, but the traveller is made aware of it rather unpleasantly by the increasing cold of the mornings and by the scantiness of vegetation, which latter circumstance renders it a very difficult task to provide sustenance for the camel. The Desert is by no means level land; we saw but one plateau of more than a day's journey in length. Generally the Desert is a succession of low chains of hills, of table-mountains, and of deep ravines, furrowed by the beds of the torrents. A physical feature often

occurs, especially in the Euphrates region, consisting of extensive depressions, in the midst of which lakes or swamps are found in the rainy season. If we might judge by the width of the water-channels in the valleys, the rainy season must bring with it a great abundance of water; and even now, after nine months had elapsed since the last rainy season, we still came every day upon large pools. It was only towards the end of our journey that our camels remained five days without water, although, it is true, this was the fault of our Arabs, who had neglected to let them drink in a valley which we passed on the second of those five days. During the rainy season the Desert is almost impracticable; the water remains stagnant on the surface of the impenetrable soil, and the camels have no safe footing on the slippery clay. Nothing renders these animals more impatient and more difficult to manage than this state of things; the traveller Wellstedt was on one occasion even compelled to abandon his camels, which had become frantic in consequence of the continual sliding about. Fortunately an oasis was near at hand. The soil of the Desert consists exclusively of clay, and the ranges of heights consists of limestone; yet we came upon a range of hills (al Berrie) which proved to be of flint-stone. The vegetation is almost entirely confined to the kind of briar which serves as an element of subsistence to camels and as fuel to men. Other plants only appear at intervals, and in very limited districts, generally near the Euphrates. The animal kingdom was more largely represented than we had

expected; yet there were no traces of ostriches—which former travellers assert that they have seen—and we are not certain that the large animal we caught a glimpse of was actually a lion; we nevertheless came upon the tracks of large troops of gazelles, and we fell in with numerous swarms of desert-hens and of small birds of the pigeon species, and an occasional bustard. But in spite of the solitude of these wild regions, the game was so shy that we did not succeed in obtaining a shot.

One day essentially resembled the other. We rose at about 1 A.M.; Ali lit a fire and prepared tea whilst we packed up our things and folded up the tent. The latter was a most trying operation, for the tent had kept us delightfully warm during the night, and the exposure to the cold, piercing night-air was the very reverse of pleasant. About 2 A.M. our Arabs had to be woke up—by no means an easy task, as they were generally very tired, and also very lazy. But be it said in their favour that they always proved sober and inured to hardships. Their only food consisted of dates, and every third day of an occasional half-pound of bread, which they baked themselves on a fire made of camel's manure; and during the bitter cold nights they slept in the open air enveloped in their scanty garments. Their muscular strength was, of course, not highly developed, owing to their slight fare. They took fully an hour and a half to pack the baggage on the camels' backs, and thus it was always 4 A.M. before we were ready for a start. We then wrapped ourselves in

our warmest cloaks and mounted our camels. During our first days in the Desert there was still moonlight about that hour; later on there only remained the stars to light our paths, and Sirius showed us our west-north-west direction. As soon as this star went down the day began to dawn in the east, and the sun then appeared in the most gorgeous play of colours. Now came the coldest moment of the day (the thermometer stood on several occasions at freezing-point); we then got off our camels and warmed our benumbed limbs by a good walk of several hours. We could not have done this during the night, as the rugs and cloaks easily come off the camels' backs—a mishap which we had to experience to our cost. About 10 A.M., after having thoroughly warmed ourselves by walking, we re-mounted our camels and ate our breakfasts seated on their backs. This repast consisted of the above-mentioned spirit of dates, bread, cheese, and dates. Ali had had the good sense to get a large quantity of bread baked hard at Hillah, so that it kept for weeks; but even this came to an end, and during the last few days we had nothing to eat but dates, of which I was always very fond, and of which I never grew tired. The second half of the day's journey was monotonous; the weather became warm, even hot during the afternoon, and we smoked one tschibouk after the other. Conversation was only possible when our camels were in good temper and when they walked close to one another; but if these animals were determined to keep at four camels' lengths apart, no human power could get them to approach

nearer. At 4 P.M. we looked about for a favourable spot where we could pitch our tent, and where the camels could find food. Having selected a likely place we dismounted; and having unpacked our baggage, we set to work to put up the tent. Ali, meanwhile, lit a fire of brambles and the camels went grazing, no one looking after them, as they never stray far away from the tent. In half an hour the soup was ready. It invariably consisted of German-sausage, rice, potatoes, and extract of meat, accompanied by a piece of bread and a glass of Greek wine. We had to be very saving with the latter, as one of the two skins which we had brought away from Bagdad had come to grief on the very first day of our journey and the precious contents were spilt. After having taken a cup of tea to warm ourselves and smoked the evening tschibouk, we lay down about 7 P.M. on our comfortable india-rubber beds to enjoy six hours of well-earned repose. The camels, which had been driven back to the tent by the Arabs, settled down around it, during which operation they more than once ran against the tent, causing it to shake all over. Silence now reigned, and the next morning the monotonous game was played over again.

Travellers situated in the same circumstances as ourselves will gladly resort to any kind of occupation to kill *ennui*. Being unable to sleep on the camel's back, on account of the balancing movement of the animal, I had ample leisure, by means of the compass, and by taking into account the even pace and progress

of the camel, to determine pretty accurately the route which we had to follow. As a starting-point I took the position of Kerbela, which almost every map that I know of agrees to place 32° 40′ lat. north, and 61° 40′ long. east from Ferro.[1] According to this standard the position of Schethate is lat. 32° 36′, and long. 61° 9′; and that of Rahallîje lat. 32° 49′, and long. 61°; the entire oasis of Al Tchiddr extending from Schethate some nine miles to the north-east. When at last we reached Palmyra, in lat. 34° 25′ and long. 56°, the difference between the actual position of that place and the position in accordance with my calculations proved to be insignificant; but I reduced my data accordingly. It may not be impossible to correct from the following notes the map projections of these regions, which hitherto have been most inaccurate. It is quite erroneous to call the Desert the Syrian or Arabic-Syrian Desert, as it is designated in most of the maps. Syria only begins where the actual Desert ceases, and the latter is in the undisputed possession of Arab Bedouins. The Desert should, therefore, be called the Arabian Desert. The monotonous character of the landscape between the Euphrates and the first parallel chain of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon renders a detailed and vivid description impossible, and I am now reduced to simply copying the dry contents of my journal.

[1] I may perhaps state that the meridian of Ferro, from which the ancients estimated their longitude, and which is still used for that purpose by some modern nations—Germany, for instance—is 18° west of Greenwich. The above calculations being especially addressed to geographers, I have thought it unnecessary to bring them into uniformity with the Greenwich meridian.—C. H.

Saturday, December 14.—We started at 4 A.M., and in the darkness passed unexpectedly a large camp of Bedouins, whose black tents and night-fires, just smouldering, were spread over the plain for nearly five miles. The dogs barked and the horses neighed as we passed by, but no one stirred, and we were spared the necessity of coming into contact with Bedouins in superior numbers, which is never a very desirable occurrence. The Desert was bleak and barren—everywhere yellow hills; the only signs of life were the tracks of gazelles, but we did not see any animals. In places the soil was covered with wild melons of bitter taste or with similar cucurbitaceous fruits. In the forenoon we passed an extensive basin without an outlet, containing a small lake in the centre, and the borders of which were still moist and slippery. In the afternoon we reached (lat. 33° 1′, long. 60° 42′) the Wadi al-Burdan, which flows from the south-west to the north-east, and the water of which is beautifully clear spring-water. To the great amazement of our Arabs we enjoyed a good bathe in it. The waterskins were also filled here, which operation was so awkwardly performed by the Arabs that the beautifully clear water became mixed with slime, and our skins finally contained a liquid resembling bad coffee, and tasting very much like it. A Bedouin Sheik rode past our tent in the evening; he probably belonged to the tribe the camp of which we had passed during the night.

Sunday, December 15.—The great event of the day was a lion. We heard a distant roaring about day-

break, and soon afterwards we saw at a distance of about 400 yards to our left a large animal trotting along the brow of a hill. As it was not yet quite daylight we were not able to distinguish clearly whether it was a lion or not; but, to judge from its great size and from its peculiar ponderous gait, it could not very well have been any other animal. This supposition was strengthened by discovering, a few days later, on the actual traces of a lion. At daybreak we perceived straight on to our right (lat. 33° 9′, and long. 60° 29′) the deserted old castle Themoil (Thammel on the map), close to which some hot-springs bubbled up, filling the air with vapour. Some fourteen miles further on we passed the broad Wadi Mahommely, which runs to the north-east, and (lat. 33° 13′, long. 60° 20′) we pitched our tent in a little Wadi plentifully supplied with water. A shepherd, who in the evening approached our tent, impelled by curiosity, was the only human being we were to meet before arriving in Palmyra.

Monday, December 16.—The Desert looked more than ever barren and desolate; morning and forenoon bitterly cold. To our right was situated at some distance the oasis of Kubetha (lat. 33° 29′, long. 60° 14′). This calculation does not well agree with most maps, which place Kubetha in the same latitude, but remove it further east. The direct road from Bagdad, which crosses the Euphrates at the little town of Hit, leads through this oasis. We soon perceived that we were approaching frequented routes, for hundreds of small paths, scarcely a foot in width, crossed the Desert;

these paths have probably been formed in the course of thousands of years by the horses and camels of the Bedouins. Such paths are met with all over the Desert, even in spots where the nearest pastures are situated at a distance of seven days' journey, and they must therefore have originated with wandering tribes. These paths are, naturally, found most frequently in the vicinity of water; and when we came to a spring on the Syrian side we could see them at a distance of a great many miles all converging to one point. Hitherto we had followed, although at a distance, the course of the Euphrates, but we now trended more to the west, towards the interior plateau of the Desert, which rises perceptibly. It is not impossible that the tract of land between the edge of this plateau and the Euphrates had at one time been built upon; at any rate, the regular line of oasis and some ancient structures—as, for instance, the ruin near Al Tschiddr and the Castle of Themoil—go far to prove that the country was not always such a barren waste as it is at present; but on the actual high plateau any kind of culture was of course impossible, as all the water-channels lie far too deep for artificial irrigation; natural irrigation is quite out of the question, from the peculiar nature of the terrain.

Tuesday, December 17.—The rising of the ground was most distinctly perceptible; chains of chalk-hills, intersected by deep ravines furrowed out by the waters, rose gradually to table-mountains extending terrace-shaped. We found in one of these ravines (lat. 33° 32′.

long. 59° 41′), which our guides called Wadi Essad, abundance of good water. Direction of the valley, as in the case of former valleys, north-west. We had to cross the chain of hills, and on the other side descended into a valley, partly overgrown with fine turf, running in a westerly direction, and which landed into the large Wadi Haurân at 33° 34′ lat. and 59° 23 long., at which point we pitched our tent. This route must be a regular caravan-route, for we constantly fell in with traces of former encampments, which could easily be distinguished by the piles of camel-dung stretching in a long straight line. This was a disadvantage to us, for the brambles had been completely devoured all round, and we had to ride for almost fourteen hours till we found a suitable place for encamping.

Wednesday, December 18.—We rode the whole day along the Wadi Haurân. The valley presents many windings, but generally preserves the direction south-west to north-east; it lies very deep (about 200 feet), and its sides are abrupt and rocky. The valley must extend very far in an upward direction, for the torrent which during the rainy season runs through it seemed to be very considerable; even now we frequently came across large pools. We found in the slime of one of these pools, which had been hardened by the sun, tracks of a large animal, most probably those of a lion, the footprints being too large for a hyæna. We also fell in with other tracks—those of a troop of Bedouins, who, to judge from the fresh appearance of the traces, had passed by within the last twenty-four hours. The party

must have consisted of at least twenty men, and an encounter with such superior numbers might have ended unpleasantly for ourselves. The tribes on the Euphrates side of the Desert are reputed to be less dangerous than the tribes of Syria and those of the Trans-Jordan districts; yet not long ago a European was robbed of everything in the oasis of Kubetha. The multitude of graves in the valley was a rather remarkable circumstance; they were marked by red stones standing upright. The nearest grazing-places being at a distance of two days' journey further east, some old tradition must have hallowed this region to have induced the Bedouins to bury their dead here. We only rode eight hours on account of the stony ground, which much fatigued our camels, and we pitched our tent in the valley (lat. 33° 24′, long. 59° 10′).

Thursday, December 19.—Ascending through a lateral valley we climbed up the western slope of the Wadi Haurân and reached a high plateau, with scanty vegetation, enlivened by swarms of birds. The Wadi Haurân continued as far as the eye could reach in a south-westerly direction, but no traces of mountains were visible at its upper extremity. The map called the high plateau on which we now stood Antar, but this name was unknown to our guides. Whilst taking the usual early walk to warm ourselves, during which our guns remained on the camels' backs, a gazelle came up, took a good look at us at a distance of twenty paces, and then bounded away. It cannot, I fancy, have seen many human beings. Our route had continued

due west. We encamped at a spot lat. 33° 24′, long. 58° 52′.

Friday, December 20.—The character of the high plateau remained unchanged. We noticed a very curious plant with cabbage-shaped leaves, growing only in certain places; the leaves first form themselves beneath the soil, and then, rising above the surface, expand, carrying with them a layer of earth. Wherever these plants grew the ground was rooted up, and the camels carefully avoided these spots. Unfortunately we had no botanist amongst the party to explain the phenomenon. The terrain, towards mid-day, became undulating, and we came upon another phenomenon of the vegetable kingdom. At intervals narrow streaks, only twenty yards in width and covered with brambles, traversed the plateau; the intervals between these streaks —each about 100 yards broad—being quite barren. This curious phenomenon lasted for a good many miles, the lines being drawn as regularly as if they were the work of a gardener. These streaks of vegetation ran, apparently, in a concentric line, and this circumstance tends to the conclusion that this curious formation must be ascribed to the action of whirlwinds. Towards evening higher chains of hills rose up on the western horizon; our guides called them Al Berrie. We halted at the foot of these hills in a broad depression, destitute of water (lat. 33° 24′, long. 58° 18′). Here Daud, the second guide, told us to our dismay that we were still distant five days' journey from Palmyra, and not three days, as Abd-ul-Aziz had most positively assured us.

Daud's assertion could scarcely be questioned, since it fully agreed with my calculations; but this did not improve the state of matters, for, depending on Abd-ul-Assiz's promises, we had divided our store of provisions over a shorter duration of time, and they were beginning to run short.

Saturday, December 21.—We had a very troublesome ride in the night over the flint-hills of the Al Berrie chain. At sunrise we reached the borders of a deep and broad valley (lat. 33° 24′, long. 58° 10′) called Al Gharra on the map, a name which our guides seemed only to apply to its upper southern course. We had great trouble in finding a descent practicable for the camels, as the rocks, which rose over 300 feet above the valley, broke off in places almost perpendicularly. When we had discovered a path we dismounted (to descend a mountain on a camel's back is most uncomfortable), and we drove our animals, which at first showed signs of stubbornness, down before us into the valley. The latter was decidedly larger than the Wadi Haurân; it was about two miles in breadth, hemmed in by steep rocks, and it fed a torrent which during the rainy season must be very powerful; it had still left many pools behind. The course of the valley is from south to north. At the extreme south we perceived a group of mountains, the crests of which must have been some thousand feet above the level of the valley. The Dshebel Laha, mentioned by Ritter, may probably be one of them. According to the sources from which Ritter drew his information the Wadi Haurân and the

Wadi Tebbel start from that mountain and unite later on. If that is the case the point of junction must be higher up than the point at which we left the Wadi Haurân, for between the latter and the Al Berrie no valley intersected the high plateau. The Wadi al Gharra cannot be identical with the Wadi Tebbel, as the course of the former is due north, and therefore precludes the junction with the Wadi Haurân. We had to ride for some distance in a southerly direction along the valley, in order to find a path by which to ascend the western slopes, and we reached through a side-valley the high plain which the map calls Roty. Here we pitched our tent (lat. 33° 19′, long. 57° 47′).

Sunday, December 22.—The plateau was rather barren, and slightly undulating. A slight rain fell during the morning. Our course, which during the previous days had been almost due west, now turned to north-west. We traversed a broad flat Wadi (lat. 33° 27′, long. 57° 33′) which ran to the north-east, and is probably identical with the Wadi Hiler. Unfortunately it was destitute of water, which was especially unfortunate, as our guides had neglected to let our camels drink in the Wadi al Gharra, a spot plentifully supplied with water. Our camels had had no water since the morning of December 19, in the Wadi Haurân. We halted behind a conically-shaped isolated hill, about 300 feet in height (lat. 33° 32′, long. 57° 26′).

Monday, December 23.—Yesterday had been sultry, and the camels, which had been without water for the last four days, showed that they could not altogether

subsist without that element of life; some of them licked from the stones the few drops of rain which had fallen in the morning. We continued in about the same direction as yesterday and traversed some unimportant Wadi without a sign of water. In the background we distinguished the outlines, though indistinctly, of the extreme parallel chains of the Anti-Lebanon; but the misty state of the atmosphere prevented us, even approximatively, from estimating their distance. In the forenoon we noticed on all sides those small desert-paths of which I have already made mention in connection with Kubetha. Here they appeared in greater numbers than I ever saw again, and they all converged to one point. Soon our animals scented the water, and at once struck off in the direction of the spring. They never deviated in the slightest degree from the straight line, and in the afternoon we reached the desired goal. A well, walled in, seventy feet in depth and five feet in diameter, stood here in the midst of the desert, distant three days' journey from the nearest oasis. It probably dates from the time of the Patriarchs, and Abraham may not improbably have rested here when journeying from Upper Mesopotamia, the land of his forefathers, to Canaan. The rope to which the bucket was attached had furrowed a groove of more than eight inches in the hard limestone rock of which the walls were composed. Yet the neighbourhood is destitute of pasturage, and a caravan only now and then encamps here. I did not find this well mentioned in any maps. It lies, according to my

calculations, in lat. 33° 44′ and long. 57° 11′. After having taken in a supply of water and watered the camels, we continued our ride for two more hours. One bucketful of water had sufficed to quench the thirst of the camels.

Tuesday, December 24.—The day was cold and windy, and it needed the view of the blue chains of mountains to the north-west, which kept on rising more and more on the horizon, to keep us in a cheerful frame of mind. In the afternoon the wind increased to a storm, and, warned by the approach of the black clouds, we had just time to pitch our tent before a terrible tempest broke upon us. Our good substantial tent, however, resisted the fury of the elements. Under these circumstances we spent Christmas Eve in the Desert in a half-sad, half-merry mood. Very little remained for us to feast upon: an extra amount of German-sausage put into the soup and the last carefully stored-up bottle of champagne. We had still a good supply of candles, and got up a splendid illumination inside the tent, whilst outside the wind was howling fiercely and the rain was pouring down in torrents. No wonder our thoughts reverted homewards. The scene of our revels was lat. 33° 55′, long. 56° 37′.

Wednesday, December 25.—The storm had abated during the night, and when we started, about 8 A.M., the sky seemed to promise fine weather; but we had scarcely ridden a hundred yards when rain and tempest broke out upon us with renewed fury. The camels for-

got even to utter their cries, and walked, one behind the other, hanging down their heads. We did not exchange one word amongst ourselves during the whole day's journey. Each one of us, wrapped in his thickest cloak, sat on his camel trying to protect his face against the rain. We dismounted after an eight hours' ride and pitched our tent as well as we could in the soaked ground, in which no peg would hold (lat. 34° 9′, long. 56° 20′). On this wet soil briars could not be got to burn. We sacrificed what remained of our packing-cases—they were empty—and poured over them the remnants of wax of last night's illumination. A powerful flame arose, and over it we prepared our soup, composed of the last morsel of sausage and the last grains of rice. Very poor soup it was! The night under wet canvas and in wet clothes reminded us vividly of the bivouac during the nights following the battle of Sedan.

Thursday, December 26.—We got up shivering and in the worst of tempers. We thought we should never reach Palmyra; but Daud, the second guide, pointed triumphantly to a gap in the mountain-chain through which we could discern the oasis. The weather meanwhile became sunny and warm, and one after the other we took off our cloaks. At last, about 10 A.M., after having crossed several hills, we sighted in the distance the longed-for Palmyra. The great Temple was reflected in the rays of the sun, whilst the other ruins, being at a greater distance, presented a hazy picture of masses of stone. This

mighty spectacle restored to each of us the elasticity of spirits which had been impaired by the hardships of the last few days, and we ran along behind our camels, striving to drive away the feeling of stiffness and discomfort.

The nearer we approached the more imposing became the mighty remains of the once great and wonderful Palmyra. We could see no traces of a village, although the well-tilled and well-irrigated fields pointed to a not inconsiderable population. In one respect we were disappointed. We had fostered the illusion of finding here an oasis with forests of palm-trees and refreshing groves, instead of which we beheld, save a dozen ugly stunted palm-trees, neither trees nor shrubs. At the entrance of the Temple we were received by the whole native population, the huts of which stood inside the immense court of the Temple, and we were conducted to the house of the elder, where we found a spacious room, furnished with elegance, with a high vaulted roof, and with the floor covered with fine carpets. The visit of Europeans was nothing new to the Sheik, the excursion from Damascus to Palmyra being frequently performed. He showed his practical wisdom by at once having a good meal placed before us, for which our stomachs yearned eagerly. We then partook of coffee in the company of the notables of the place, amongst whom were some Turkish officers stationed here. The coffee was certainly the best which I ever remember having tasted. Its preparation was, it is true, a most lengthy process, for which time could

scarcely be found in Europe. Our host began by giving the key of the coffee-box to his eldest son; and the latter then brought a handful of coffee-berries, which the father carefully sifted, throwing aside every bad one. The berries which remained were then pounded in a huge mortar. These mortars are heirlooms, valued in proportion as the wood is impregnated with the aroma of the coffee. The coffee pounded is then put into a small brass pot, boiling water being poured over it; and after having been left to boil for a few minutes the coffee is poured out into tiny cups. The coarser portion of the sediment remains in the coffee-pot, and the finer portion soon collects at the bottom of the cup. The beverage is taken without the addition of either sugar or milk, and it really is most delicious. After the first cup had been handed round the whole process, which lasted nearly half a hour, was begun anew. In the evening we organised a great illumination of the Temple by means of magnesium wires, of which we carried with us a large supply for the purpose of lighting up ruins. It was apparently the first time that the ruins had been artificially illuminated, and a multitude of people followed us to the Temple. A Turkish lieutenant was roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and he repeatedly assured us that he had never in the whole course of his life seen anything so beautiful. The splendid architectural forms standing out in the bright glare of the intense light, and set off by the presence of the motley crowd, formed a truly magnificent spectacle.

Palmyra, the Queen of the East, was once a prosperous oasis, the emporium of trade, and foremost amongst the cities of Syria. It must formerly have been surrounded by groves of palm-trees, as denoted by the Semitic name Tedmur, which means 'city of palms;' this name was Romanised into Palmyra, in the same manner as the Latin word *palma* originated in the Semitic *tamr*. Palmyra attained the zenith of its grandeur at the time of the Parthian wars. Odenath, a citizen of Palmyra, at the head of the Syrian army, vanquished the Parthians, and applied the rich treasures which he captured to the building of a magnificent city. But the envy of the Romans was soon aroused, and his daughter Zenobia was dethroned by the Emperor Aurelian, and the city was destroyed. Since that day her monuments have lain in ruins, and the dry atmosphere of the Desert has preserved them so entirely that many friezes and inscriptions appear as fresh as if chiselled yesterday. The former prosperity has been destroyed, and the inhabitants of a small village, built as a protection against plundering Bedouins in the great court of the Temple, alone take advantage of the soil, which is fertilised by a strong spring of slightly sulphurous water. The abundance of water would suffice for a much larger area than the one which is now under cultivation; but the scarcity of labour and the constant insecurity of the country prevent permanent prosperity. The population consists of Syrians, who are easily distinguished from the haggard, beardless Bedouins by their luxuriant growth of

hair and by their athletic build; but the Arab conquerors have imposed here, as well as in other parts of Asia and in Africa, the use of Arabic, and the Syrian tongue is no longer spoken. Europeans are frequently seen within these walls. Not many years ago a journey to Palmyra was only practicable on paying high tribute to the Bedouin chiefs who held their sway in this neighbourhood; but these children of the desert are kept at a respectful distance by Turkish garrisons and by breech-loaders; and in spring, the chief season for travelling in Syria, scarcely a week elapses without a traveller coming from Damascus. Dragomans provide for the excursion, which can be easily performed in a fortnight; and an escort composed of a few Turkish soldiers affords ample protection.

The mightiest amongst the ruins of Palmyra is the great Temple, or Temple of the Sun, which encircles the whole of the village. A square 250 yards in each direction is enclosed by a wall forty feet high, constructed of beautifully carved stones, and adorned with Corinthian half-columns. Along three of the sides run a double range of pillars, each façade comprising sixty pillars, whilst the entrance-front possesses on the western side a colonnade of forty-five immense pillars. The sacred shrine stood in the centre of the great court of the Temple, a moderately large peripteral temple of sixteen and eight pillars, the entrance of which was adorned on the western front by a high projecting arched doorway. Although the arrangement does not in this respect answer to the strictly classical

style, and although the height of the pillars exceeds the Vitruvian standard, the impression nevertheless conveyed by the whole is not only overpowering by its enormous size, but it is also in the highest degree artistical. The pillars, some of which are still in a good state of preservation, possess rich Corinthian capitals, but are not fluted. The capitals of the pillars belonging to the actual temple seem to have consisted of precious metals, for they have been carefully removed from the shafts. The interior of the holy shrine consists of vaulted halls, with beautiful cassette decorations on the roofs. Of most exquisite workmanship are the rich decorations found here as well as on the projecting doorway, consisting of friezes and garlands—mostly leaves and fruits, and in perfect preservation. The huts of the village impede the view. The village occupies the whole space between the inner temple and the walls, and from the roofs of its houses the ruins are seen to the best advantage. The outer gateway in the western façade of the walls must also have been of monumental grandeur; but it has been so altered during the Middle Ages that its original form can no longer be recognised.

At the north-west corner of the Temple is situated the entrance-gate of the great colonnade, not unlike the Arch of Constantine at Rome. It is, by means of two façades running against each other in an oblique line, so skilfully disposed that the angle of refraction, which is formed by the axis of the colonnade and the line of vision of the Temple, is entirely withdrawn. The colonnades extend as far as the northern gate of

ENTRANCE GATE TO THE COLONNADE (PALMYRA).

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the city, and large open halls ranged with pillars, and a royal palace join it on both sides; and even now, when only the tenth part of the 2,000 to 3,000 pillars which once stood there is extant, the aspect of this forest of pillars is sublimely grand, and whatever has not been destroyed by the hand of man has, in consequence of the dry air and of the substantial quality of the bright yellow limestone, been preserved quite intact. The delicate details of the decorations and the numerous inscriptions look as fresh as if they had only yesterday emerged from the artists' hands. At one part of the great colonnade each pillar has affixed to it a *console*, with the corresponding drum of the column, carved out of one piece, upon each of which once rested the bust of some citizen of Palmyra; the inscription below, in Greek and in the Palmyro-Syrian language, gives the name and condition of the honoured personage. In one long row may be read the names of the former councillors and tax-gatherers of the Queen of the East, whose busts have been ruthlessly destroyed by the Roman soldiery. Few vestiges remain of the palace; probably it especially aroused the anger of the Emperor Aurelian. There still exist the ruins of some minor temples and the beautiful façade of pillars of the northern gate; and along the vast expanse of ruins which is enclosed by the remnants of the city walls the traveller every now and then stumbles against architectural fragments of the most perfect beauty. The period of bloom of Palmyra was the last ray of sunshine which fell upon the antique sense of the beau-

tiful; from that moment began the sober period which finally diverged into the most miserable Byzantinism.

Outside the walls lies, in a small valley, the 'City of the Dead' of the Palmyrians. It contains sixty towers, built of huge stones, each tower containing the grave of a family. A slab above the entrance, with an inscription in two languages, often held by genii, records the name and honours of the family. A stone staircase leads up to the five or six storeys, each of which possesses a small antechamber, and the stone sarcophagi rest in recesses of the wall at the sides. Many a beautiful detail of decoration and numerous traces of frescoes may be seen on the walls of the staircase. Some of the towers are easily accessible; in one of them we even noticed remnants of the clothing which enveloped the dead. Besides these towers there are also tombs hewn in the rocks, which contain multitudes of sarcophagi, mostly of coarse workmanship.

We devoted the whole afternoon to the ruins, and then ascended a mound near the city, on the top of which stands a nearly inaccessible castle, dating from Arabian times. Some Turkish soldiers had escorted us, and one of them, a negro, climbed up the tower of the castle. We felt quite giddy at the sight of the daring exploit. After he had safely got down again he claimed the merited backschisch—not in specie, but in Lefaucheux-cartridges, which seemed to have made a great impression upon him. When his request had been granted (we had no more need of the cartridges) he grinned with delight. Whilst still enjoying the

view of the city of ruins beneath our feet a sudden noise arose in the village; there was great vociferation and running to and fro. From the mound we could distinctly hear the noise and din below, and after a few minutes the garrison of the place came forth in marching order. The alarm was caused by a troop of camel-drivers who had appeared in the neighbourhood, and who had been taken for plundering Bedouins. They turned out to be a harmless caravan from Damascus, and the excitement then subsided. The fright which had been produced by the apparition of unknown arrivals proved to us that the country was not yet in a peaceable condition, and we decided upon accepting the escort which had been offered to us by the Commandant, and which at first we had intended to decline.

The Commandant, who looked rather like a German village schoolmaster, was a very good fellow; he did all that he could to oblige us, and made himself very agreeable. Our chief desire was to reach Damascus, as we had had quite enough of Abd-ul-Aziz and his camels. The Commandant remarked that our camels would go much better when there were horses behind them to keep them from lagging on the road, and when our two Arabs had had their lazy and obstinate nature stirred into action by the presence of the Turkish escort. He gave some orders to that effect to the soldiers who were to accompany us. He also compelled Abd-ul-Aziz to produce some stores of flour which hitherto he had contrived to keep out of sight,

and, in view of future forced marches, to give to the camels a good feed, of which they stood in great need. Abd-ul-Aziz suddenly became a transformed being. Up to the present time he had always shown himself indolent and arrogant; he now became energetic and polite; and soon after we had returned from the ruins and had taken our dinner all was ready for continuing the journey.

Several chains project on the Desert side in front of the Anti-Lebanon, which extends from north to south. They at first run parallel with the principal chain, and then diverge from it in a south-west, north-east direction, and in the map present the appearance of a fan. Palmyra is situated at the base of the extreme mountain-chain, which rises some thousand feet above the Desert, and a lower ridge close behind the oasis offers an easy pass leading across to the valley which separates the farthest chain from the second mountain-chain. We took this latter route, after having watered our camels at the spring which fertilises the oasis. The Commandant, who showed great anxiety about our safety, had given us an escort consisting of sixteen soldiers and a very amiable lieutenant. The soldiers were quick, intelligent Turks, mounted on small fleet mules, and both men and beasts were in the best of tempers. Not so Abd-ul-Aziz, who, dejected by the prospect of forced marches, rode along in silence with his cloak drawn over his face. To increase his misfortune the Turkish soldiers (who hate every Arab, which I can readily understand) sneered at him and be-

fooled him, delighted at the prospect of being able to vent their exuberant spirits upon some one. Ali was in great glee; for more than three weeks he had had no opportunity of speaking his mother-tongue, which seemed a great hardship to him, and he now made up for lost time by chatting the whole twenty-four hours. We started about mid-day. After having crossed the lower ridge we went straight on in a south-westerly direction in the valley, some five miles in breadth, which separates the nearly parallel chains. The country was again barren and desolate, like the region before Palmyra. At 6 P.M. we halted for a short time. The camels received their flour-dumplings, the horses got some barley, and the Turkish lieutenant and myself had a little picnic together, to which I contributed some cold roast mutton and he some egg-cake, both of which were delicious. We then resumed our journey, some of the Turkish soldiers riding in advance as *avant garde*, and the others keeping close behind the camels, which latter had very materially increased their pace. At 2 A.M. we halted near the ruins of an old castle, and we all lay down on the cold ground to enjoy a well-deserved though very brief repose. The trumpet sounded at half-past 3 A.M., and at 4 the whole caravan was in motion. Curiously enough neither we nor the camels felt particularly tired when at mid-day we entered the oasis Karjetên after a march of twenty-four hours, and after having accomplished seventy-five miles. It is probable that the sight of human beings around, after three weeks' solitude in the Desert, produced so

great a reaction that our animal spirits overcame the feeling of fatigue.

We found shelter under the roof of the elder of Karjetên, and were much annoyed by the curiosity displayed by the inhabitants. The first who called upon us was the Syrian Catholic priest of the place. He came solely for the purpose of selling to us spirit of dates, and as our supply was very low his visit was particularly welcome. Then followed one after the other a number of natives who entered unasked and stared at us in the most stupid manner, saying nothing. At last we could stand this proceeding no longer, and in a very demonstrative manner shut the door in their faces. We here parted company with our Turkish attendants, thanking them very much, and giving them a present. Ali then took me aside and told me confidentially that the Turkish lieutenant had a special request to make, but did not dare to do so for fear of giving offence. The object of his desires was a pair of white kid gloves, the last of a long line of ball-gloves which had found a grave in the East. I do not know whether the pair in question was intended to adorn his or a lady's hands; they soon went over into his possession along with some other European trifles, and he seemed greatly rejoiced. We were glad to afford him this little gratification, as he proved himself to be a first-rate fellow. During the course of the afternoon I paid a visit to the Commandant of this place and requested the favour of an escort to accompany us the following day to Damascus. The Commandant being unwell could not receive

me, but he at once granted my request. After our fatigues of the last two days no one will feel surprised at our going early to rest.

The Turkish Government has, only within the last few years, established garrisons in the small oasis of Eastern Syria, and in spite of the insignificant number of these garrisons and of the distances which separate the different posts (Karjetên is situated seventy-five miles from Palmyra and thirty-eight miles from the nearest oasis on the way to Damascus) they have succeeded in materially reducing and subjugating the hordes of plundering Bedouins. The carabines (American breech-loaders) with which the troops are armed have, it is true, contributed in a great measure towards this result, for the children of the Desert stand in natural dread of these guns. Two squadrons, mounted on camels, have also been formed, each camel carrying two riders, and when the whole squadron is in marching array the cries of the animals is said to be terrific and quite unbearable. The remaining mounted troops are not provided with horses, but with small mules, very hardy, and capable of great endurance, as had been proved in the case of our late escort.

The next morning, December 29, I paid a second visit to the Commandant, as our escort had not arrived. The yesterday's indisposition was real, for I found him so hoarse that he could scarcely utter a word. And yet I met him walking with bare feet in the court-yard to fetch the water needed for his morning coffee. Certainly notions of health are very different in the

East to what they are with us in Europe. He apologised for the unpunctuality of his men, immediately sent orders for the escort, and we were soon ready to start. Unfortunately our escort did not this time consist of Turkish soldiers, but of Arab militiamen, who are here called zaptieh—a name given in Turkey to policemen and gendarmes. The difference soon became apparent. These fellows were little obliging, and, in fact, took no notice of us whatsoever, so that the camels, who lacked the propelling element, soon relapsed into their usual slow pace. Our route steadily continued in a south-west direction, between the two mountain-chains, which gradually approached one another. The valley also rose perceptibly. At sunset we distinguished in the distance some habitations, and about 8 P.M., after twelve hours' uninterrupted ride, we reached the first house. At this point we had to abandon one of our camels. It had already shown signs of weakness in the desert and had, in consequence, been always laden as lightly as possible. Its strength now gave way altogether, and Daud, our second guide, who had given us great satisfaction, stayed behind with it, whilst Abd-ul-Aziz, with the sourest possible face, remained with us. An hour later we reached the large village of Dsherrûd, where we found a fine apartment, replete with marbles and carpets, in a very richly furnished house. Unfortunately there was no fire in the room, and as we could obtain nothing to eat we were condemned to suffer equally from cold and hunger. We consoled ourselves with some coffee, of which we partook in large quantities

in order to keep ourselves awake; for we determined after a short rest to continue our journey and not to halt again until we had reached Damascus. Abd-ul-Aziz vowed most positively that he would not move one step; but we soon settled that point. Then came the zaptiehs asking to be dismissed. We told them that they might return if they pleased, but that all who left us would forfeit their backschisch, which would be given to those who continued with us to Damascus. This reply succeeded very well, for three of the number at once declared themselves ready to remain with us, whilst the others, to whom, nevertheless, we gave a trifling *pourboire*, decided on quitting us.

The few hours which we had intended to devote for rest having been spent in constant negotiations, we again mounted our camels shortly after midnight. We had not had one moment's sleep, and scarcely anything to eat. The coffee, however, kept us awake, and when anyone of us felt himself getting drowsy he dismounted and aroused himself by a brisk walk in the cold night air. The night gradually passed away. We kept ascending in proportion as the valley rose up to the ridge which unites the two mountain-chains. On both sides followed a succession of villages and hamlets. When the day began to dawn we were quite near to the ridge, and just as the first rays of the sun came shining down upon the mountains close to us we reached the height. The view which here disclosed itself to our gaze was magnificent. In front rose the mighty mass of the Hermon, the southern point of the

Lebanon, covered with snow from its crest to its base, and resplendent in the full light of the morning sun. Beneath our feet lay the green environs of Damascus. In the far distance we beheld the towers and the minarets of the city, and on one side were the mountains of Northern Palestine and those of the district of Haurân. To our left extended the vast expanse of the desert; whilst to our right bleak chains of hills connected the range of heights which we had just crossed with the Anti-Lebanon. The panorama was wonderfully beautiful, and to us who for weeks had seen nought save the dreary desert and barren hills it appeared a thousandfold grand and lovely. We now quickly descended into the plains. Neither the camels nor the horses of our escort betrayed any signs of fatigue, and as for ourselves we felt so enraptured at the sight of the snowy Hermon and of the city hidden amongst verdure, that we threw off all feeling of lassitude after the sleepless night and after the long ride of twenty-four hours.

When we had reached the valley I mounted upon the horse of one of our zaptiehs and, accompanied by another of these soldiers who had been in the employ of a dragoman and who knew a few words of French, I rode towards Damascus in order to obtain quarters for our caravan. I soon gained the region of these extensive gardens, which are fertilised by powerful streams flowing down from the Anti-Lebanon; but the city itself was still far off, and I had to ride for three hours before I arrived at the gates. My horse, which had not the powers of endurance displayed by the mules of the

Turkish soldiers, soon became wearied under the rays of the mid-day sun—a circumstance hardly surprising after a seventy miles' journey—and in spite of the charms which trees and evergreen shrubs possess for the traveller emerging from the desert, I was heartily glad to approach a town and enter again an hotel perfectly in the European style. Good luck befell me on reaching the gates. A rider came along the road whose appearance was so unmistakably German that I addressed him in my native tongue. With the purest Vienna accent he replied that the best hotel was the Hotel Dimitri; at the same time he pointed to a man who would show me the way. I did not ascertain who he was. He seemed in a great hurry, and he rode off in an opposite direction. From his exterior I took him to be a servant. The traveller becomes so confused amidst the number of languages spoken in the East that at the moment it did not appear strange to me, coming from Bagdad, to be addressed in my native language at the gates of Damascus.

I now rode through different streets and bazaars to the hotel, where I was received in a very polite manner by the Greek owner; and I here renewed my acquaintance with that class of people popularly called waiters. The zaptieh, who had accompanied me solely for the purpose of afterwards returning to the gates for my companions, in order to show them the way to the hotel, became on account of his indolence the cause of new mishaps. He promised faithfully to bring my companions safe to the Hotel Dimitri; and, to prevent

any mistakes, my orders were repeated to him in Arabic by the dragoman of the hotel. But scarcely was he out of our sight than he forgot all about his errand, laid himself down and went off to sleep. The result was that at 2 P.M.—a good hour after my arrival—my companions came to the gates, and finding no one to meet them proceeded to another hotel, situated at the very opposite end of the extensive city. Instead, therefore, of being able to enjoy the repose to which we were fully entitled, we were obliged to run about looking for one another the whole afternoon. Before we had all got together and had collected our baggage and seen it safely stowed away at the Hotel Dimitri, the night had set in. The culprit did not, however, escape punishment. The dragoman of the hotel took my firman to the police; and rumour has it that subsequently, as a correction for himself and as an example for others, the zaptieh had a somewhat lengthy conference with a jailer. It is superfluous to add that we needed no rocking that night to entice slumber.

We were unfortunately obliged, in order to catch the steamer at Beyrout and to avoid the alternative of hanging about that place for a fortnight, to calculate very narrowly the time of our stay at Damascus, and to abandon altogether the idea of a trip to the ruins of Baalbek. If, when at Bagdad, we had already had some experience of camel journeying we could have better apportioned our time, and we might have arranged our plans accordingly. This proved the truth of the old adage, that a liberal allowance of time

should always be made when travelling, and that an extra day or two should be added to every week to meet unforeseen occurrences. Our parting from Abd-ul-Aziz, whose false assertions had all along been the cause of our miscalculations, was not a very friendly one. Daud, however, had given us great satisfaction, and we would fain have bestowed upon him some souvenir, but he had remained behind at Dsherrûd with the sick camel, and had been unable to catch us up.

After having accomplished the most important formality after a long journey, viz. a Turkish bath, and after having presented Ali with our tent, cooking apparatus, &c., we entrusted ourselves to the care of a dragoman, and went to view the city. We did not feel disposed to devote much time to sight-seeing, and we contented ourselves with a tour through the bazaars—which contained nothing worthy of note—and with a visit to the great sight of Damascus, the Mosque of the Ommajades. This edifice,[1] originally a Christian

[1] In connection with this Mosque—at one time the Church of St. John—a curious circumstance is related by Fergusson:—

'According to Jelal-u-deen the Church of St. John remained the joint property of the Christians and Moslems, both praying together in it, or, at least, on the east and west sides of a partition run through it, from the fall of the city in the year of the Hejira 14 to the time of the Caliph Walid in the year 86. He either offered the Christians four desecrated churches in exchange for it, or threatened to deprive them of one which they held on sufferance. As soon as this matter was settled, it is said, he pulled down the Christian church, or at least part of it, and in ten years completed the present splendid mosque on its site, having first procured from the Emperor at Constantinople fit and proper persons to act as architects and masons in its construction.'

The western portal of the atrium is all that remains of the ancient Christian church.—C. H.

church, was turned into a mosque under the rule of Moawijah, the first of the Ommajades, and is as sacred to the Sunnites as Kerbela and Meschhed Ali are to Sheeites; but it is not a shrine of pilgrimage. Not many years ago it was an utter impossibility for any Christian to penetrate into the interior; now a police order, which costs twenty francs, will open the door to every stranger. The building is a very long basilica, with three aisles, and the interior is in the sober style peculiar to all mosques. The odour of sanctity is derived from the supposed tomb of John the Baptist, over which a most tasteless pavilion has been erected. The view from the minaret is glorious. The vantage-ground is situated in the centre of the picturesque city, and overlooks the extensive and luxuriant orchards which surround Damascus. Further in the background rise up the rocky declivities of the Anti-Lebanon, and not far off the mighty snow-crowned Hermon sparkles in the glare of the sun; whilst to the east a yellow streak denotes the edges of the Great Desert. The character of the city was quite novel to us; everywhere fountains were bubbling, and the streets were lined with ash-trees, maple-trees, and palms; only occasionally did a palm-tree remind us of the banks of the Euphrates. The people of the place, too, seemed strange to us, with their bright striped garments and with their type of features so entirely different from that of Bagdad. We passed the afternoon strolling through the city, and we were shown one of the Damascus sights, the house of a rich Jew (the style might be called the Turkish rococo)

which we thought very ugly. We were then taken to a hill from the top of which we cast a parting glance at the earthly paradise, as Mahomed styles Damascus. In the evening we celebrated in a solemn bowl the end of our journey through the Desert and the coming of the New Year. Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest!

In the morning of the first day of the year 1873, we were up betimes, for the French mail-coach left at 4.30 A.M. for Beyrout. The mail-coaches belong to the company which has constructed the road across the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, an important work for the East. The service is very regularly performed. There are stations at every ten kilometres, where horses are rapidly changed; and on the well-kept road the five strong horses soon get over the ground. The company is most jealous of its privileges; the road can only be used by its own coaches and goods vans, of which latter a great number are met with on the road; whilst the many caravans have to find their way as best they can. The first half of the road, the pass across the Anti-Lebanon 4,000 feet in height, is stony and desolate. Then follows the fertile Coele-Syria, a broad level valley, which is towered over by the snowy peaks of the Lebanon; and some miles to our right lay the famous ruins of Baalbek, which, unfortunately, we were not destined to behold. We took our mid-day halt at Stora, and then we ascended the steep declivities of the Lebanon by means of numerous zigzags. The descent on the far side was glorious. Beneath us was

the blue sea of the Mediterranean; and all around lay the garden-like country of the ancient Phœnicians, with its ever-changing scenery and its southern vegetation. It was still daylight when we reached Beyrout, and we were speedily seated at the well-furnished dinner-table of the 'Albergo dell' Oriente.'

The Austrian Lloyd's steamer had been delayed, and contrary to our expectations we had a few more days at our disposal. The period of rest was most welcome, and we seized the interval to repair our outward appearance and render it more European, for it had fallen into sad neglect during the journey. The day was spent, as is usually the case in the East, in strolling about the town, and in making little purchases. The evening was always passed in the house of Herr Weber, the German consul-general, a charming gentleman. Beyrout is a delightful little oasis: with all the comforts of European life it combines all that is picturesque in the East, and the almost tropical vegetation makes the neighbourhood resemble a perfect fairyland; whilst in the background the snow-crowned peaks of the Lebanon complete the picture. On three sides the town is surrounded by the sea, and a forest of masts in the harbour recalls the Fatherland across the waters. The finest view of the sunset at Beyrout is obtained from the roof of the Turkish barracks, which are situated at the highest point of the town. When the last strains of the discordant Turkish *retraite* have died away, darkness gradually spreads over the charming fairy gardens, the tops of the palm-trees vanish in the evening mists, and

only the snow-cloaked Lebanon shines from above in the far-east.

A Turkish *retraite* has also its amusing side. The principal meal of the day precedes it; and as soon as the battalion has turned out into the court-yard of the barracks a bugle is sounded, upon which each detachment marches round its sergeant and the men individually convey to him their thanks for the good food which the Sultan has deigned to bestow upon them. The sergeants then perform the same formalities in front of their captains, and the latter in their turn repeat these formalities before their colonels. These ceremonies being all concluded, the music performs a *fanfare*, the troops cry out thrice in Arabic, 'God preserve the Sultan!' and the whole line loudly clap hands once; the soldiers then disband and return to barracks. In spite of the deep sense of the serious which lies in this ceremony it nevertheless, when viewed from the roof of the barracks, looks pre-eminently ludicrous. Perhaps the Turk might enjoy his quiet chuckle if he was to be present at one of our parades and witness our officers, in time of profound peace, approaching one another with solemn countenances and whispering to each other mysteriously the *parole* for the day. Each country has its peculiarities; and, to take one example, the Oriental mode of greeting, which consists in laying the hand on the chest and on the forehead, is certainly more dignified than the bowing customary amongst Europeans.

The interior of the town is not very remarkable, but

in the bazaar two objects will be found which will attract and delight the stranger. These are exquisite gold-embroideries and silver filigree-work, which latter, as regards delicacy of execution, is in no way inferior to Genoese products; and the traveller who knows where to go to and who has some experience of Oriental bargaining will hardly fail to carry away with him many charming souvenirs. The population is a curious mixture of Europeans—chiefly Italians—of Arabs, and of Syrian Christians. At Beyrout, as well as throughout the Levant, everyone speaking Arabic is called an Arab; and thus the entire population of Syria and Phœnicia is called Arab, although destitute of Arab blood, or at least possessing very little of it. The Christian population predominates, and scenes of murder like those which take place at Damascus would not be possible here. The dress of the inhabitants of Beyrout is very picturesque. It consists of a fancy Turkish costume, comprising a short jacket and pantaloons reaching below the knee—a showy attire, set off by men who are generally well-built and of elegant appearance. The head-dress consists of the red fez, which is worn here, as in the Lebanon, in a tapering form, octagonally shaped at the top. Strangers arriving in the East easily come to the conclusion that this costume represents the true Arab dress, although the two have no points in common. Bedouins seldom come to Beyrout; I only once noticed the bronzed faces, encircled by the kefije, of these children of the Desert.

The neighbourhood offers charming excursions, one

of which we were able to make, owing to the delay in the departure of the steamer. At a distance of some nine miles north of the town the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog river—the ancient Lycus—after traversing a barren ravine in the rocks, flows into the sea. A brisk gallop on our sturdy little horses first brought us along the gardens of the town; we then came to the soft sands of the seashore, and in an hour's time we reached the river. The wall of rocks on the left bank of the stream contains the most ancient strangers' book in the world. First of all, a ruler of Assyria, who had conquered the universe from remote Nineveh down to the sea, had caused his effigy to be hewn in this rock and his name and fame to be recorded in cuneiform writing; he was followed by a Pharaoh Rhamses, whose deeds are transmitted to posterity in hieroglyphics. Centuries later the Roman Emperor Antoninus, accompanied by his legions, passed this way, and left behind him a Latin inscription. A Kufic inscription recalls to mind the conquest of the coast-lands by the Arabian Caliphs. Finally, on the appearance in 1860 of the French expedition for protecting the persecuted Christians, General Beaufort D'Hautpoul, the Commander-in-Chief, caused the name of Napoleon and his own to be inscribed amongst those of the Assyrian rulers, the Pharaohs, the Cæsars, and the Caliphs.

The hour now strikes for departure and farewell. Ali, our faithful servant, took his leave. We felt sorry at parting from him. With all his faults he was a good, honest fellow, and without him our journey

would not have been successful. Travel had not brought bad luck to Ali; the pale, starved face which we had seen at Kutais was transformed into a fresh-blooming visage. His savings would now afford him a long period of happiness—an interval of *dolce far niente.* Ali, too, felt the separation. His last sad words were, 'Do such great storms exist between this and Poti as between Bakù and Lenkoran?' And when I answered 'Yes' he departed with a sorrowful countenance.

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On a glorious sunny morning the Austrian Lloyd's steamer 'Saturno,' homeward-bound, weighed anchor, and a few hours later was bearing us swiftly to Europe.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAVELLING IN THE CAUCASUS, IN PERSIA, AND IN TURKEY IN ASIA.

Tourists in the East—Travelling in the Caucasus—Literature and Maps—Season for Travelling, and Expense of the Journey—Papers and other Requisites—Dress, Baggage, Provisions, &c.—Lodgings—Means of Conveyance—The Russian Posting-system—Riding-horses—Pedestrian Trips—Intercourse with the Natives—*Routes of Access to the Caucasus*: 1. Moscow to Petrowsk across the Wolga; 2. Moscow to Vladikawkas *viâ* Rostoff; 3. Odessa to Poti; 4. Constantinople to Poti.—*Principal Roads in the Caucasus*: 1. Poti—Tiflis; 2. Tiflis—Vladikawkas—Temirshanschura—Derbend-Bakù; 3. Tiflis—Signach—Nuchà—Schemachà—Bakù; 4. Tiflis—Erivan—Persian Frontier near Dshulfa.—*Branch Roads*: 1. In the Tscherkesse Country and the Kabarda; 2. In Abkhasia, the Districts of the Rion and the Mountain-chain between the Elburz and the Kasbek; 3. In Grusia, Kachetia, and the Tartar Khanates; 4. In Armenia and the Karabagh; 5. In Daghestan and the Tschetschnià—Travelling in Persia and Turkey in Asia—Literature—Maps—Season for Travelling—Expenses of the Journey—Travelling Requisites—Lodgings—Means of Conveyance—Routes.

TOURISTS IN THE CAUCASUS.

THE number of travellers leaving the main arteries of steam communication and penetrating into the heart of the East has, up to a comparatively recent date, been a very diminutive one. It has, however, grown rapidly within the last ten years, and will no doubt increase year by year along with the further development of avenues of communication. The travelling

contingent is chiefly composed of Englishmen, but Germans begin to rival with their Anglo-Saxon cousins, especially in exploring the more unknown and the more inhospitable regions of the East. To both of these, however, a book is still wanting which may serve them as guide, for writers of the Bædeker-Murray school have confined their handbooks for the East to the coast-lands of the Mediterranean and to Egypt; and these countries, with their dragomans, their hotels, and their regular means of communication, do not, in many respects, convey a fair representation of the East. The complete absence of a handbook is not the least obstacle which frightens many a well-disposed traveller from undertaking a trip to the Caucasus; the journey has always been considered more difficult of accomplishment and more expensive than it really is. Although I propose in the following pages to furnish some information respecting Eastern travels, my remarks must be considered as nothing more than the practical reminiscences of my own journey, for they lack the completeness of professional handbooks.

TRAVELLING IN THE CAUCASUS.

I think it would be well to treat the question of travelling in the Caucasus and that of travelling in Persia and Turkey in Asia on a different basis.

First, as regard *the Caucasus*. As far as my information goes the number of tourists has hitherto been a very limited one—at the most from twenty to thirty travellers a year, the greater number of whom kept to the railway system, without penetrating into the interior of the country. Many tourists travel as far as Tiflis and return, satisfied that they have seen the Caucasus. To this circumstance must be traced the profound ignorance which still exists in Europe with regard to the Caucasus and Trans-Caucasia. According to some it is a country which in grandeur and beauty far surpasses anything which the Alps and Italy can offer. According to others it is a country which can only be traversed armed to the teeth and under strong escort. Both these representations are incor-

rect. The Caucasus can, as regards beauty, neither compare with the Alps nor with Italy. It lacks the variety of the former and the culture of the latter. As regards grandeur it certainly stands second to no country with which I am acquainted, and its chief attractions, its primeval vegetation, can only be fully appreciated by those who have actually seen it. As regards security of travel, danger is out of the question at the present day, and the tourist is far better protected against the pernicious influences of the climate than is the native himself. But this is the negative side of the question; let us come to the positive side—to the question often put to me, '*What does the Caucasus offer to the tourist?*' A concise answer is difficult if not impossible. It affords such an abundance of new manifestations of nature and of humanity that the answer to that question should be left to those who have visited the country and made use of *their intelligence.* I purposely say *their intelligence*, for many have been there and have merely noticed bad roads, still worse inns, and dirty people, having possessed neither eye nor ear for the beauty that surrounded them. Speaking for myself, I recommend most earnestly the Caucasus to all lovers of nature, and I am prepared to give the assurance that none visiting the country imbued with artistic tastes have ever turned away from it dissatisfied.

LITERATURE.

Literature respecting the Caucasus accessible to the European public is scanty. A very useful book is Petzholdt's 'The Caucasus,' Leipzig (Hermann and Fries). It contains descriptions of travels very true to nature, and also useful advice. Haxthausen's 'Trans-Caucasia' is useless to the tourist, as also is Bodenstedt's 'A Thousand and One Days in the East,' which latter work, however, is rather entertaining on the score of humorous reading. The other work by Bodenstedt, 'Die Völker des Caucasus' ('The Tribes of the Caucasus'), is deficient in accuracy, and errs on the side of partisanship for Schamyl. Some excellent monographs on

single portions of the Caucasus by Radde, the Director of the Museum at Tiflis, have recently been published. His work, 'Travels in the Mountain Districts of Mingrelia and its Three Longitudinal High Valleys' (Tiflis, 1866), is almost indispensable to the traveller in Swanethia. His cyclus of four lectures on the Caucasus, published in the thirty-sixth supplement to 'Petermann's Monthly Magazine' (March 1874), is also much to be recommended. Ritter's Geography should not be omitted, although the tourist will not find in it so much information on the Caucasus as on Persia and the countries of the Euphrates and of the Tigris. The works by Koch, Wagner, and Abich are purely scientific. Amongst works written in the French language should be mentioned Dubois de Montpereux's 'Voyage autour du Caucase,' somewhat antiquated now; 'Lettres sur le Caucase et la Crimée,' edited by Mr. de Gilles, Imperial Russian Librarian, a very good description of travels, published in Paris (1859) by Gide. Alex. Dumas' well-known book 'Le Caucase,' although swarming with exaggerations, is nevertheless very entertaining reading, and contains some passages written with perfect truth to nature. A work has been lately published which may be considered the best for tourists—it is Freshfield's 'Journey in the Central Caucasus and Bashan' (London, Longman & Co.). Freshfield was the first tourist that undertook expeditions in the mountains of the Caucasus, and his book contains very good descriptions. Cunynghame's 'The Black Sea, the Caucasus, and the Caspian,' is useless, more especially as the author understood nothing but English. For journeying to the Caucasus through Russia Murray's 'Russia' is much to be recommended. For the Crimea this handbook is excellent, and for the remaining portions of Russia in Europe it is to be preferred to similar works—Bastin's, for instance. Much has been written on the Caucasus in Russian; but, apart from the fact that to the majority of tourists the Russian language must be unknown, I only know of one single book which can be of general use to travellers. It is Wladykin's 'Handbook for the Caucasus' (Moscow, 1874)—a faithful and elaborate

description of the journey from Rostoff to Vladikawkas, Tiflis, and Poti. Another elaborate and excellent work is in course of publication; it is the 'History of the War and of the Rule of the Russians in the Caucasus,' by Dubrowin (Petersburg, Part I., 1871), already mentioned in Chapter IV. The third book of Part I. mentions no less than 2,355 works, monograms, and articles from periodicals on the Caucasus, and comments upon them. This, however, is of but little value to the tourist, since these works can only be met with in great libraries. A Caucasus Almanack, published yearly at Tiflis, gives useful statistical information regarding post-roads, &c.

MAPS.

Maps have been better cared for than literature. Excellent maps have been projected from the survey of the Russian General Staff; they are to be got on three different scales, viz., 5, 10, and 20 versts ($3\frac{1}{3}$, $6\frac{2}{3}$, $13\frac{1}{3}$ English miles) to an English inch. The 20-verst map will suffice for the traveller on the main roads, but whoever intends penetrating into the mountain districts will do well to provide himself, either in St. Petersburg or Tiflis, with the necessary sheets of the 5-verst map. The sheets represent 90 versts (60 miles) in height by 120 versts (80 miles) in width; the average price amounts to one rouble each, for coloured and mounted sheets. One verst is equal approximately to $\frac{1}{7}$ German mile, $\frac{2}{3}$ English mile, $\frac{14}{15}$ kilometre. But even this map is not altogether reliable in the mountain districts, and its glaciers have some times very arbitrary forms. A good map is the one by Kondratjeff, Topographical Institute, St. Petersburg, 1872. All these maps are in the Russian character, and the traveller will do well to acquire sufficient knowledge of Russian letters to be able to read the names.

SEASON FOR TRAVELLING.

The best season for travelling is spring and autumn. Summer is to be avoided, on account of the oppressive heat and the unhealthy condition of the atmosphere. As for winter the

state of the roads renders travelling impossible. Although the richness and variety of colours in the vegetable kingdom and the greater length of the days would seem to give the preference to spring, yet autumn has not less important attractions. In the first place, the mountains are free from snow during the latter season, and mountaineering can be carried on with less difficulty than in spring; and moreover the air is purer and fair weather more certain. The best months are September and October. August is enjoyable in the mountains, but the lowlands are at that time hot and full of fevers. November is a more enjoyable month in the plains than in the mountain districts. The tourist has, consequently, four whole months at his disposal, which afford him ample time for a pleasant trip. He should not stay less than six or eight weeks in the Caucasus, otherwise he will have to hurry through the tour or leave the country at the very moment when he begins to enjoy it. I have given further on an estimate of the approximative duration of time required for single tours. In general the tourist will not go far wrong if, on carefully estimating the time required for the tour he has in view, he adds one-fourth or one-third on account of unforeseen impediments or of minor trips. Apart from such *contretemps* as illness or bad weather, a hundred causes, even the most trifling ones, may occasion him unpleasant delays; and to guard himself against the occurrence of these disturbing causes he will do well to have a large margin of extra time.

EXPENSES OF THE JOURNEY.

The question of travelling expenses depends less on the will of the tourist in the East than in Europe. He cannot always live as he would wish. He will often be compelled to remain satisfied with what a few kopecks will procure him, although he would willingly spend more. At other times he will be forced to spend ridiculously high sums, and get very little in return for the money. In general the first necessaries of life are very cheap, but everything else is twice or three times as expensive

as in Europe. In towns the merest trifle will often cost a fabulous sum. Added to this, the means of conveyance are generally far from cheap, owing to the many horses and escorts which are pressed upon the traveller, and to the Russian custom of high *pour-boire*, which the stranger cannot disregard. Finally, as he has to pay much more than the native for everything that has no fixed rates, it will hardly appear strange that the daily expenses of the journey average from ten to twelve roubles and upwards. According to another estimate, which agrees pretty nearly with my own, six to eight roubles must be allowed per day for each single individual when two or three travel together, and from eight to ten kopecks per verst. In the case of tourists who start from a central point to make single trips these estimates may be slightly diminished, as they are not obliged to carry much baggage and provisions with them. As regards money the tourist will do well either to provide himself with Russian banknotes or to get a draft on Tiflis. Notes of small amount, and especially silver coins (20, 15, and 10 kopecks), are of great importance, as getting change for a five-rouble note often occasions the greatest difficulties, and notes are not readily received in the mountain districts. Notes for larger amounts, ten roubles, for instance, are generally (Tiflis and a few larger towns excepted) converted with difficulty into coin. Care must be taken in regard to carrying money, and the tourist had better keep it, when possible, about his person. He must also beware of displaying it in an ostentatious manner in the presence of natives.

PAPERS AND OTHER REQUISITES.

A passport duly countersigned is a necessary requisite to enter the Russian Empire, and the losing it, even in the interior of the country, is a very awkward business, especially as the tourist may be called upon to produce it in each town and even at each post-station. Tourists will do well, therefore, to carry it constantly with them. Of almost equal importance with the passport is being provided with good introductions

to the authorities of the country. Whereas the traveller with good introductions will find his path made smooth for him, and by means of notices sent on in advance good care will be taken by the respective authorities at such places as he may call at to keep in readiness lodgings, means of conveyance, and everything else that he may require, the traveller not so provided will find himself thrown on his own resources, will scarcely find shelter, will be delayed everywhere, and will be laughed to scorn by each post-master. Introductions to high officials have, it is true, this inconvenience, that in towns the traveller will often not be left one moment unobserved, and will be overwhelmed with offers of service, which are simply troublesome; whilst the visits and return visits often take up the best portion of his time. The papers which he must get drawn up on his arrival in the country are the *Crown-padaroshna* and the *Otkrytyjlist* (open letter). About the first details are given further on in the paragraph devoted to post-coaches. The latter is a command to all local authorities to provide the traveller, on demand, with the necessary escort. Such an escort is now scarcely required for the safety of the traveller, and it often becomes a plea for all kinds of delays and petty annoyances; but often it is an efficacious instrument in cases where a certain *prestige* is necessary, as, for instance, in the case of a stubborn postmaster.

A main requisite for the journey is a good servant, well up in languages, and who is also able to cook. The tourist who is master of the Russian language will perhaps be able to do without a servant on short trips, but on long tours, and especially with much baggage, he will require the services of one. But travellers unacquainted with Russian cannot possibly get on without such a servant. Each traveller, however, must be able to understand a few Russian and Turkish phrases.

DRESS.

I have often, in Europe, heard it stated that in hot climes strangers should be as thinly clad as possible, and had I not learnt wisdom through former experiences I might easily have

been induced to follow bad advice. Considerations of health imperatively demand warm clothing, especially on account of the enticing coolness of the evenings, which inevitably brings on fever. Besides, the weather often changes so rapidly that travellers lightly clad constantly shiver with cold. On the strength of my own experience, as well as that of others, I recommend woollen under-clothing, at any rate a flannel shirt, and over this an easy costume of stout woollen material. The most comfortable dress is a shooting-jacket, and sportsmen had better have some cartridge-pouches sewn on in front, after the manner of the Tscherkesska. A belt is very pleasant in the case of much journeying on horseback. As regards *chaussure* the best are high water-proof boots, up to the hips if possible, on account of the mud and for fording purposes. Lighter shoes and gaiters will be found useful in fine weather. As head-covering most tourists will prefer a broad-rimmed felt hat, with a muslin veil. I can, however, recommend the Caucasian *papach*, agreeable both in hot and cold weather; its weight is not so considerable as it would appear, and nothing keeps off so well the scorching rays of the sun, which occasion violent headaches; it makes, besides, a capital pillow. A warm, wide, and, if possible, padded cloak is required for cold nights, and an india-rubber overcoat for rainy weather. The native *burka* is heavy and uncomfortable, and only protects a portion of the body. Arms form so essential a part of dress in the East, that, except on the high roads, where of course they are superfluous, the traveller will do well to carry a gun with him, even if not a sportsman. It will always give him a certain *prestige*. I will add, in the interest of the sportsman, that he will more generally meet with small game; a fowling-piece is therefore preferable to a rifle. The cartridges must be brought ready filled from Europe, for good gunpowder is either not to be got in Russia or is very rare. The tourist must also bring with him all the requisite paraphernalia for cleaning and repairing guns.

BAGGAGE.

The source of great anxiety, both when preparing for the journey and during the journey itself, is the baggage. It is a great mistake to carry too much, but a still greater one to carry too little. In the East the traveller can only depend on what he carries with him, and he must never expect to get the merest trifle in the country itself. He will, therefore, do well to bring with him in sufficient quantity from Europe all those trifles which with us can be bought in every little place, especially writing material, and the thousands of little things which he will constantly need, such as twine, tape, pins, sewing implements, screw-driver, hammer, bodkins, nails, books, straps, &c.; also good Swedish matches, for those which I found in the Caucasus were generally 'fire-proof.' A pair of candlesticks which can be screwed together and a stout small dark-lantern (bull's-eye) will prove useful, as also a camp-table and a camp-stool. A travelling bed is a *sine quâ non*, for beds are not always found in hotels. Besides the camp-bed a leathern cushion will be found very desirable. In Russia everybody carries one when travelling; it proves especially serviceable on the telega. A good stout carpet, which can be used for many different purposes, should form one of the first purchases in the Caucasus. The best kind comes from Persia and from Bakù; the best size is eight feet by four. A tent is only necessary in the Caucasus in the case of actual mountaineering; for such purposes it will be best to carry an English tent, as those to be got in the country would be found too large and too heavy. I have mentioned further on all that is needful about saddles and harness. An india-rubber basin is indispensable, as also some towels and table-napkins; and a case containing knife, fork, and spoon should not be forgotten. When departing from the high road a complete *ménage*, consisting of tin plates, india-rubber cups, and cooking utensils (a large and a small copper kettle and a stewing-pan, at the least), could not be dispensed with. Objects of this kind, practically got up for travelling pur-

poses, can only be met with in England, and all attention and care bestowed upon these matter-of-fact objects before the journey will be repayed afterwards. The medicine-chest must contain opiates, an aperient, a tonic, some suet of deer, arnica, some plaster, and, most especially, the indispensable quinine. The best preventives against intermittent fever are warm clothing, good wine, guarding against the evening air, avoiding colds and indigestion (not too much fruit!) and abstaining from water. The best remedies are change of air and quinine. Medical men in the Caucasus prescribe the latter in very strong doses—generally two grammes to be taken in four doses at an interval of several hours. Lesser quantities are considered generally without effect. The traveller venturing into out-of-the-way parts of the East will do well to carry with him some mysterious looking medicine-bottles, and pills, gilded over if possible, consisting of any inoffensive substance, to be administered to the crowds coming to be cured of all kinds of diseases. It never will do harm, and will give an incredible *prestige* to the traveller. Some insect-powder is especially required, and also a mosquito-net. The former is to be got at Tiflis. What further objects will be required must be left to the judgment of the traveller. It certainly is advisable to be provided with a number of small presents for the natives; as, for instance, penknives, pocket-mirrors, several compasses (for Mahomedans to find the direction of Mecca), and similar objects. More effect is often produced by such trifles than by ten times the value in money.

Especial care must be bestowed on two more subjects, viz., victuals and packing material.

PROVISIONS.

As mentioned before, the traveller will, large places excepted, often get nothing but uneatable bread and bad water. He must, therefore, be constantly provided, even on the main roads, with the necessaries of life. Tea, the best remedy against heat, cold, and fatigue, comes first on the list. A tea-

pot, which the traveller will himself keep clean, is necessary. Sugar must be carried in large lumps, as it is easily grated. Wine is better carried about in small leathern skins, bottles being too fragile to stand being carried about in the telega. A very good beverage for travelling is kachetia; the traveller soon gets accustomed to its naphtha taste. Preserved meats occupy the first rank amongst eatables, and foremost stands the incomparable German-sausage, called 'Erbswurst,' which for weeks often constituted our sole repast. Those who cannot digest the abominably bad bread of the East should carry with them some kind of hard biscuits. As preserved meats can only be procured in Tiflis, and but very rarely in other places, the traveller must be provided with a good supply before starting on his journey; he must on no account forget Liebig's extract of meat, so useful in all emergencies, and (except when in towns) provide for a daily consumption of about fifty grammes per head.

PACKING MATERIAL.

European luggage is decidedly impracticable for this journey. The trunk, with its sharp corners and edges, gets too much knocked about on the telega, and its contents are mercilessly shaken together and spoiled; whilst on horseback the ropes by which it is fastened rub holes through it. Besides, Oriental servants do not understand how to handle luggage foreign to their ideas, and they require a length of time out of all proportion to fasten it on. Another disadvantage consists in the difficulty of keeping the balance between two trunks, which renders a judicious loading of baggage on horses an impossibility. On the other hand, Oriental packing-sacks are very handy. There are two kinds—the *churdsin* and the *mafrasch*. The *churdsin* (in Russian called 'ssumka perjémetnaja') is a double sack, after the manner of cavalry saddle-bags, and is found in store at the bazaars of all sizes. Its principal merit consists in the equal balance preserved between the two sides, and it is easily fastened on the pack-saddle, few straps or ropes being required. The *mafrasch* is

a long sack, slit up lengthways, very suitable as a receptacle for larger parcels. It is fastened by means of straps and buckles, and a beast of burthen (or pack-horse) carries a pair of them, each weighing 1½ cwt., without fatigue. Although the coarse woven material out of which the churdsins and mafrashes are manufactured is very strong and durable, it is not altogether water-tight, and a perfectly tight overcloth made of prepared linen or hemp will be found desirable. Ropes must also be taken, for the want of them often occasions vexatious delays.

LODGINGS.

When the traveller has reached the Caucasus by one of the routes mentioned further on, and has provided himself with the requisites for the journey, two serious questions present themselves, viz. how to manage about getting (1) lodgings, and (2) means of conveyance. The traveller will find in the hospitality of the Oriental what the hotel offers him in Europe. Hospitality is displayed in the most handsome manner in the Caucasus, as well by the natives as by the Russians. Strangers need never hesitate to beg for hospitality; for what with us would be considered as an importunate request is there regarded as a matter of course. Oriental hospitality gives what it has to give, that is, a shelter, eating and drinking, and a kind welcome. As for comfort it does not possess it, and, therefore, cannot offer it. There is one drawback, however, for which the traveller must be prepared: a great waste of time is always connected with the acceptance of hospitality. The Caucasian, who in common with all Orientals is ignorant of the value of time, is so attentive to his guest, and takes such care of him, that the latter scarcely gets a moment to himself, and when the hour of departure arrives he is delayed so long before he can make a start that frequently the best part of the time is lost. The Russian custom of late suppers also has its inconvenience; for travellers who have been sitting in the saddle since 6 A.M., only to reach a hospitable roof at sunset, can hardly be expected to wait till eleven or twelve

at night on an empty stomach, and then to sit down to a most abundant repast. Politeness, however, makes it impossible to retire before that hour. Thus it happens that the traveller will often feel more at his ease with the native, be he a Grusinian nobleman or a Tartar khan, or even a simple peasant, and yet meet with equally kind hospitality. With them he will be more master of his time, and especially of his night's rest. It may be admitted as a rule that no stranger will ever be refused shelter, even without previous notice having been sent. Nevertheless, it is always advisable to send on in advance a messenger to request night-quarters. The only parts of the country in which I heard of inhospitality are Mingrelia and Imeretia, and also the wild mountain region of Swanethia. Although I never experienced any such difficulty myself, yet I have heard cases mentioned of other travellers being unable to obtain night-quarters. In such an emergency the traveller cannot do better than to forcibly take possession of night-quarters, pointing to his position and power; and the same peasant who a moment before has rudely thrust the stranger from his door will immediately become pliant, and finally good-natured. It is a general custom for the traveller, when taking his departure, to leave a *pour-boire* for the servants of his host, and even the peasant who has received him will generally accept money. Should he refuse to accept it some other gift—as, for instance, a penknife, a pocket-mirror, and for Mahomedans a compass—will be found acceptable.

The *Crown-house* (Kazjónnyj dòm), a Government building, to be found in nearly every town, forms a kind of compromise between a private house and an hotel. Every one travelling on Government business has a right to obtain accommodation in these buildings, and foreigners provided with the official papers mentioned before stand on an equal footing with the Crown messenger. The *Crown-house* offers a room with bare walls, sometimes furnished with a chair, table, and wooden bench, and sometimes empty. The watchman, generally an old invalid, is now and then able to hire the necessary pieces of furniture in the town, but the traveller has to find

his own food. The stay at Crown-houses is consequently a very uncomfortable one.

Tiflis alone possesses hotels in the European style (Hôtel du Caucase and Hôtel de l'Europe). The hotels of other towns, as a rule, scarcely satisfy even moderate expectations, and are very expensive. It frequently happens that the traveller has to pay ten to twelve roubles a day for moderate food and a bad room. Precise information as to whether a town possesses an hotel or not can only be obtained at the spot itself. For instance, we never knew that an hotel existed at Temirchanschura until we arrived there. Hotels exist in the following towns, which hotels, however, are often of the worst kind, and even without beds:—Poti, Kutais, Alexandrapol, Tiflis, Signach, Vladikawkas, Pjätigorsk, Groznaja, Kizljar, Temirchanschura, Petrowsk, Bakù. In some towns (Erivan, for instance) the steward of the Russian Officials' Club can provide the traveller with a room. At Borshom a wing of the Crown-house, when not occupied by Russian officers who happen to be in the place, is let to travellers. The stations on the post-road Tiflis-Vladikawkas are prepared for the reception of travellers. Some of these stations are even quite comfortable. On other roads there is only one general room, with some wooden benches; and black bread constitutes, as a rule, the only element of food. In case of necessity the traveller will find shelter, though of the poorest and dirtiest description, in village inns (*duchan*), which are frequently met with on the roads. Such a *duchan* almost always possesses a garret or other vacant place. The provisions it can offer consist merely of spirits, sour wine of the country, and bad bread; and perhaps also cheese, eggs, and chickens. If the traveller wishes to eat mutton he must have a whole sheep killed at his expense.

MEANS OF CONVEYANCE.

I need only refer briefly to railways and steamers, as they were fully described in Chapter I.

The line from *Poti* to *Tiflis* (289 versts—192 miles—accomplished in sixteen hours) is in full operation; and the line from *Rostoff* to *Vladikawkas*, with a branch line to *Pjätigorsk*, is to be opened in 1875. The most interesting portion of the *Poti-Tiflis* line, from Kwirila to Suram, has been described in Chapter II. The *Rostoff-Vladikawkas* line is simply a railroad across the steppe, and offers nothing remarkable save the fine view of the principal chain of mountains.

With regard to the steamers sailing on the Black Sea and the Caspian I have still to add that, besides the 'Odessa Steamships and Commercial Company,' some small steamers sail along the coast of the Black Sea in the service of the Government, but at rather irregular intervals.

Post-coaches are the most important means of conveyance in the interior of the country. I have enumerated the different post-routes in Chapter I. The passenger post-coach system in Russia does not provide the traveller with passenger-coaches going and coming in regular order, but it simply gives him the possibility of hiring horses at a fixed rate, and also provides him with a vehicle, the ill-famed *telega*, which has, however, nothing in common with other four-wheeled vehicles. The traveller who intends to make use of the posting system must be provided with the post-pass, the *Padaroshna*, which is of three kinds:—

I. The *Courier-padaroshna* is only given to Government messengers, and to the highest officials. It secures to the bearer precedence over all other travellers at post-stations, and also the best horses.

II. The *Crown-padaroshna* (kazjonnaja padaroshna) is given to everyone travelling on Government business. A traveller provided with good introductions will not find it very difficult to obtain one. It is delivered gratuitously, and is distinguished from the ordinary *padaroshna* by its bearing two stamps instead of one. It secures to the bearer precedence over other travellers, the Government messengers excepted. The traveller who on the strength of his introductions can lay

claim to a *Crown-padaroshna* will do well to have it drawn up, not for one particular route, but '*do raznich mest Imperii*' for all places within the realm, and especially for six horses. In that case he will not require a fresh *padaroshna* during the whole journey.

III. The ordinary *padaroshna* is delivered to everyone on payment of half a kopeck per verst for each horse for a specified distance. One kopeck per verst is equal to a halfpenny per English mile. This document secures to the traveller *de jure* the requisite horses, as soon as such are available; *de facto* it secures to him nothing at all, but simply delivers him up to the tender mercies of post-masters. So far the legal side of the question; as for the practical side it is not quite so simple. On the strength of his *padaroshna* the traveller demands that the requisite horses be produced; to which is returned the stereotyped answer that there are no horses available for the moment, and that he must return later on. Travellers satisfied with this excuse may wait a long time. The experienced traveller, however, will at once go to the stables and satisfy himself as to the veracity of the post-master's assertion, and he will generally find horses in sufficient number. He will then begin by threatening to send complaints to the proper authorities, supporting his case with demonstrative hints as to his own position; and the post-master will very soon desist from all further opposition.

The quickest drive from one station to another which I accomplished was 17 versts in 55 minutes, and the most rapid change of horses was effected in 18 minutes. As a rule the traveller provided with the *Crown-padaroshna* can calculate on an average speed of 12 versts (9 miles) an hour, and a good half-hour's delay at each station, so that in a day's journey of 12 hours seldom more than 100 versts are got over. I, however, managed to accomplish 126 versts (84 miles), but this was owing to high *pour-boire*. The getting along on frequented roads is still more precarious, and it often is nearly impossible to travel beyond three or four stations, and to accomplish more than from 50 to 60 versts. As

for night travelling the tourist will wisely avoid it, save perhaps in the Steppe.

The *personnel* on the larger stations consists of the post-master and the 'smatritjel' (inspector); on the smaller ones there is only one of these personages. As I have been informed, the post-master stands towards the Treasury in the relation of a simple contractor, whilst the smatritjel is a post-official, who has to superintend the former and to see that he strictly observes the regulations. However this may be, the real fact of the matter is that post-master and smatritjel conspire together to torment in every possible way and even to cheat the traveller. I often experienced attempts at extortion. As for politeness and prompt service that is quite out of the question; and great was my surprise when, on the Malakan stations of the valley of the Akstafa (Government of Jelissawetpol), I met with a thoroughly polite and agreeable *personnel*, and also with a rapid change of horses.

The want of horses, often occasioning a stoppage in the journey which may last several days, is generally only an excuse on the part of the post-master; yet stoppages happen pretty regularly in the course of the afternoon on frequented roads. The cause lies in the insufficient supply of horses at the stations, and also in the severe prohibition with regard to using return-horses. The number of horses is always calculated according to the number of troikas (which require three horses). The stations on the Grusinian military road, for instance, have each sixteen troikas, whilst those on the unimportant branch road Achaitzich-Achalkalaki only possess three troikas. Sixteen troikas, or forty-eight horses, would seem a sufficient supply, but it must be borne in mind that the telega requires three horses and a carriage with four seats five to six horses. It was only on the stations of the Akstafa valley that we could obtain light vehicles of German construction, drawn by two horses. The telega has to be changed at each station, and the fares can only be paid from one station to the next one. The Grusinian military road is the only one on which a through traffic exists. The *pragon* (fare) is not the same

everywhere. In Cis-Caucasia it amounts to 2½ kopecks per horse and per verst; in Trans-Caucasia to three kopecks. On the Grusinian military road the fare for ordinary passengers is four kopecks. Nothing has to be paid for the use of the telega, but each yamtchik receives a small *pour-boire*. The latter is generally a dirty rascal, who drives carelessly, and has a strong propensity for spirits.

It still remains for me to make a few remarks on the vehicle, the ill-famed *telega*. Four clumsy wheels, two axle-trees, which each carry a kind of box, and on these two boxes a flat shell, in the form of a kneading-trough, composed of planks, and there you have the whole *telega*. There is scarcely room for two people in this shell, the bottom part of which is often only a foot below the edges, and the unfortunate travellers are in constant danger of being thrown out. As for a seat, properly so called, there is none. By means of a net made of ropes, called *pereplot*, and of rugs and cushions a place is got up at the back of the telega upon which the traveller can sit, though in a most uncomfortable position, as the peculiar construction of the shell prevents him from stretching out his legs. The yamtchik gets up in front on a little board. A traveller with baggage and a servant cannot manage with less than two telegas and six horses; his baggage, moreover, will be quite ruined, and his own nerves and bones, after a few hours' ride, get in a very pitiable plight. That, at any rate, is my experience, and it is fully corroborated by the accounts of other travellers. Petzholdt, however, passes a more lenient judgment on the telega, and even views it with some favour.

The *tarantass-telega* is a somewhat more agreeable modification of the *telega*. Its fore and aft frames are connected by means of several poles, of about six feet in length, which are somewhat springy, and to some extent soften the jolting. In other respects the *tarantass-telega* is as deficient as the *telega*. The former vehicle is to be found at nearly every station. The actual *tarantass* is a chaise with a hood. It is not to be found at the post-stations, and can only

occasionally be hired in larger towns. They are, however, to be met with on the Grusinian military road. The traveller who does not intend to depart from the post-roads will do well to purchase a tarantass; he will thus spare his limbs, and avoid a constant change of carriage.

RIDING-HORSES.

The most enjoyable manner of travelling in the Caucasus is on horseback. The traveller is thus altogether his own master, and free in his movements: two advantages he is deprived of when travelling by post. I have only to add, after what I have said in the second chapter about Oriental horses, that the traveller can depend on finding good horses throughout the whole of the Caucasus, Mingrelia and Imeretia excepted, where the steeds often are of the most lamentable kind. The horses of the Kabarda and of the Tschetschnia are considered the best. The Karabagh breeds are of the purest blood, but precisely on account of their blood these horses are less suitable for tours. The chief characteristic of Oriental horses is their mild temper. Although several hundred horses were ridden by our party, yet I do not remember one single unpleasant occurrence in connection with them. They are willing, and possess endurance; and are satisfied with scanty fare and but little attention. A traveller well recommended is provided by the authorities with horses on demand, a circumstance which he must not overlook in his own interest, as he thereby escapes endless bargaining with horse-dealers. He will have to pay the customary *pragon* of three kopecks per horse and per verst; in Daghestan five kopecks. All overcharge must be peremptorily refused. The mountainous nature of the country generally prevents horses from going fast. The amble-pace, which so many Caucasian horses perform to perfection, is a very comfortable mode of riding to the traveller; it conveys the rider about 8 versts (5½ miles) an hour; the amble-trot conveys him about double the distance, and even more. The regular trot is unknown to most of the horses, but they will start off at a gallop on the slightest

provocation, even when standing still. An average journey of ten hours a day being by no means extraordinary, the traveller may calculate on accomplishing about 40 to 50 versts each day. We managed 60 versts in the mountain districts, and our horses did not seem over-fatigued.

A few remarks still remain to be made with regard to saddle and bridle. The native saddle is to the European, a perfect instrument of torture, and the Cossack saddle is very little better. Both have very short stirrups, which obliges the rider to keep the upper part of the leg in a nearly horizontal position, and the seat is so high that he is in constant danger of falling over the horse's neck. Each traveller should, therefore, bring with him a good European saddle. The saddle must be provided in front and behind with a number of rings and loops for fastening on parcels, and the girths must be made to buckle three or four holes higher up than is customary in England. The latter precaution is most important, because the Caucasian horses are often small and narrow, and nothing so worries the rider as a loose saddle on hilly roads. A good felt over-cloth is also desirable. It is scarcely necessary to bring a bridle, as Caucasian horses are without exception ridden on a snaffle, which can always be obtained in the Caucasus. Good reins are desirable, as those used in the country are often coarse and hard. The rules for riding are the same as in all mountainous countries—an early start, tight girths, the necessary precautions against the swelling out of the horse and against over-tight girthing, and a light hand; when ascending a mountain keep the reins quite loose, and when descending also give the reins without hesitation to good horses, for they are not accustomed to any support at the mouth. If the traveller uses the same horses several days running he will have to see that they are properly fed by the attendants. Generally they only get a complete meal in the evening, very little in the morning, and nothing at mid-day.

PEDESTRIAN TRIPS.

Travelling on foot is nearly unknown in the Caucasus, and Freshfield has probably been the first tourist in that line. It could only be recommended to those who intend to combine excursions in the mountains with the journey. Such travellers must bring with them from Europe the whole mountain-climbing apparatus, viz., a hatchet, a pickaxe (or alpenstock, with hatchet), a veil, spectacles, &c.; and, finally, they must bring from Switzerland an experienced glacier-guide, for such guides are not to be met with in the Caucasus. A pair of mountain-shoes and stout leather gaiters will prove a desirable supplement for all tourists; they will save the riding-boots on stony roads.

The three principal peaks, the Elburz, the Kasbek, and the Ararat, present no insuperable difficulties to trained mountain-climbers; but there are still hundreds of peaks to be found, especially in Swanethia, which with regard to difficulties can compare with any of the Alpine peaks. Those to whom the Matterhorn or the Schreckhorn do not offer enough adventure should try the Uschba, in Swanethia, or the Adai-Chock, in Ossetia. The glacier districts of the Caucasus are not very extensive; they are limited to the tract between the Kasbek and the Elburz, which has been travelled over by Freshfield. West of the Elburz the glacier districts still extend over some forty-six miles, whilst only single glaciers, and these of small size, are to be met with east of the Kasbek. The total superficies of the glaciers amounts to 1,600 square verets (150 square miles), or two-thirds of the Swiss glacier districts.

INTERCOURSE WITH THE NATIVES.

To set down rules concerning the intercourse with the people is a difficult and also an idle task. Experience alone can give the traveller that assurance which will save him from extortions and other annoyances. A few hints, however, will prove useful to him. First of all, he must depend solely on himself, and never upon others. He must always show

great firmness, and always act the grand-seigneur, born to command. This does not, however, in the least interfere with the exercise of politeness. All accounts should, when possible, be settled by himself, or at least in his presence. He should never leave to others the task of arranging agreements respecting prices—not even to his host. The notion of time is unknown to the Oriental. The Turkish word 'bu saat' and the Russian 'sij tschas' both express the same thing—*immediately*—but neither assurance is of the least practical value. An early start is in many instances only accomplished with great difficulty. Let the traveller never depend upon being awoke at the right time. A favourite expression is the postponing to the morrow—in Russian 'zaftra,' in Turkish 'jaryn,' in Persian 'farda,' and in Arabic 'bukrà.' Firmness and energy will alone protect the traveller against such nonsense.

Nor are fixed prices understood in the East. Each transaction is accomplished by means of bidding, and in spite of all precautions the foreigner is almost always imposed upon. In the case of larger purchases the great rule is not to haggle about single objects, but to bid one sum when all the desired objects have been chosen; otherwise the price will rise with each new object in proportion to the reduction made on the foregoing one.

In regard to distances and positions the traveller should rather place reliance on a good book and a good map than on the information imparted by natives, for in the case of a place distant more than a day's journey their information is generally quite unreliable. He should never attach the least importance to hearsays, and trust more to his own eyes than to the statements of those who pretend to possess experience.

Finally, the two material requisites being forthcoming, viz., good health and good weather, the traveller needs only to provide patience and good temper, and the journey will certainly prove an enjoyable one.

ROUTES OF ACCESS TO THE CAUCASUS.

1. *Moscow to Petrowsk or Bakù, across the Wolga and the Caspian Sea, 9–12 days.*

From Moscow in 12–16 hours to Nishni-Nowgorod (fair from beginning of August to middle of September) by rail. Thence to Astrachan in 6–8 hours by the steamers of the companies *Samaljot, Kawkaz i Merkurij, Wolga-Kama*; a tedious journey, and therefore not to be recommended. The gigantic new steamers of the *Kawkaz i Merkurij* and of the *Wolga-Kama*—amongst others the 'Alexander II.' and the 'Perjeworot'—are good. From Astrachan to Petrowsk in 2 days, to Bakù in 4 days; but delays frequently occur. The traveller can avoid the long sail on the river by taking the railway from Moscow *viâ* Rjezan and Grjazi to Tzaritzyn, and thence proceed by steamer to Astrachan (in 30 hours) and Petrowsk or Bakù.

Further details about these and the following routes of access will be found in Murray's 'Russia.'

2. *Moscow to Vladikawkas*, viâ *Rostoff.*

From Moscow either *viâ* Rjezan-Waronesch or Kursk-Charkow to Rostoff on the Don, by rail (3 days); thence to Vladikawkas (1–2 days) by the railway to be opened in 1875. This will be the most comfortable route. The traveller coming from Germany will join it by going *viâ* Galicia (or Warsaw), Kiew, and Charkow.

3. *Odessa to Poti.*

From Odessa, per steamer, in 5–6 days to Poti. Steamers leave Odessa every Thursday in summer and fortnightly in winter. When following this route, which has been fully described in the first chapter, the Crimea can easily be included in the tour.

4. *Poti to Constantinople.*

Steamers leave Constantinople once a week, calling at Trebizonde and Batum. Length of journey 4–5 days.

PRINCIPAL ROADS IN THE CAUCASUS.

1. *Poti to Tiflis.*

By railway in 16 hours, *viâ* Kutais, the pass of Suram and Gori. The distance between Poti and Suram has been described in the second chapter. From Suram to Tiflis the line follows the valley of the Kura. Gori is pleasantly situated. In its neighbourhood lies the famous town of Uphlis-tziche.

2. *Tiflis to Vladikawkas, Temirchanschura, Derbend and Bakù.*

From Tiflis to Vladikawkas 2 days, to Groznaja 1 day. Thence across the Steppe in 2 days to Temirchanschura, *viâ* Tscherwlonnaja and Chazafürt, passing a branch-road to Petrowsk. From Temirchanshura in 4 days to Bakù *viâ* Derbend and Kuba. Pretty scenery, especially between Derbend and Kuba.

The day's journey is calculated at the rate of 10–12 hours of good post-driving.

3. *Tiflis to Signach, Nuchà, Schemachà and Bakù—5 days.*

Nuchà is said to be a pleasant town, and the country between Nuchà and Schemachà is described as being fine; further on it is barren.

4. *Tiflis to Erivan and Dshulfa (Persian Frontier).*

Tiflis to Erivan, 3 days. At Akstafinsk a road branches off to Schemachà (passing Yelissawetpol) and joins the road to Bakù (two days). From Erivan to Dshulfa (two days), *viâ* Nachitschewan (*vide* Freshfield).

BRANCH ROADS.

1. *In the Tscherkesse Country and the Kabarda.*

These parts have been least visited by travellers, and, it seems, present little that is remarkable. Besides, they are nearly destitute of population since the emigration of the Tscherkesse tribes. The tract of country from Soukhum-

kaleh to the mouth of the river Sotscha, along the coast, and passing Pitzunda (celebrated church), is said to be worth seeing. The little fortress of Maikop, in the interior of the country, affords through its central position, many opportunities for excursions. The celebrated watering-place Pjätigorsk, near the railroad from Rostoff to Vladikawkas, has but little attractions to offer, except the view on the principal chain of mountains, seventy miles distant, and on the unimportant mountain-group, the Beschtaù. Yet Pjätigorsk (*vide* Freshfield) is a convenient starting-point whence to visit the northern portions of the Elburz.

2. *In Abkhasia, the Districts of the Rion, and the Mountain-range between the Elburz and the Kasbek.*

Here is found the true Caucasian Switzerland, comprising the most beautiful and grand manifestations of nature :—

a. Abkhasia.—The plain towards Mingrelia is easy travelling. The traveller can in 2–3 days reach Poti along the seashore, as well as Zugdidi, skirting the mountains. Rich vegetation. Not to be recommended in the fever season.

b. The Tsebelda.—The valley of the Kodor has a wild grandeur. Two high passes lead northward across the principal chain to the sources of the Kouban, the pass of Maruch, in the west, and the pass of Kluchra, in the east.

c. Mingrelia.—The Mingrelian lowlands are traversed by the railway. Fine scenery between Senaki and Zugdidi (1–2 days).

The Mingrelian Highland (Letschgum) offers a pleasant excursion from Kutais to Lailaschi (4–5 days); thence returning *viâ* Gordi, the residence of Prince Dadian, or continuing into Swanethia and the Radscha.

d. Guria.—Fine excursions from Poti along the seashore and across low mountain-chains to Ozurgeti (4–5 days); thence returning to the railway-station of Senaki.

e. Imeretia.—Excursions from Kutais (central point) to Gelati, Motzamethi, and other places. Pleasant excursions *viâ* Wartziche (model farm of Herr Ananow) and across a

mountain-pass (splendid view on the principal chain) to Abas-Tuman (*vide* Freshfield).

f. The Radscha (Highlands of Imeretia).—From Kutais to Oni (2–3 days), either *viâ* Lailaschi or *viâ* Tkwibuli; or from Kwirila to Oni, passing Ssatschcheri and the monastery of Dshrutscha (*vide* Freshfield). From the Radscha the tourist can get into Swanethia, across difficult mountain-passes, or reach the valley of the Uruch, to the north. The pass of Mamisson (*vide* Freshfield) leads in 3–4 days to Vladikawkas along the valley of the Ardon. The tourist can also get in a south-easterly direction to Gori (3–4 days), along the valley of the Ljachwa.

g. Swanethia.—Swanethia can be reached from Zugdidi across the ravine of the Ingur (4 days), from Kutais across the Letschgum district (3 days), and from the Radscha. Excursions from Uschkull to Pari (5–7 days), fully described by Freshfield and Radde. High mountain-passes lead northward into the valley of the Baksan (2–3 days), (*vide* Freshfield).

h. The Northern Declivity of the principal Chain between the Elburz and the Kasbek.—The valleys of the Baksan, of the Tschegem, of the Tscherek, of the Uruch, and of the Ardon have been fully described by Freshfield, as also the mountain-pass leading from the valley of the Terek to that of the Ardon. Grand glacier scenery; ascension of the Elburz and the Kasbek.

3. *In Grusia, Kachetia, and the Tartar Khanates.*

a. Excursions in the environs of Gori.

b. Excursions in the environs of Borshom, Achaltzich, and to Abastuman.

c. From Tiflis to Achalkalaki, *viâ* Mangliss (4 days).

d. From Tiflis to Etschmiadzin along the valleys of the Chram and of the Dabeda, and across the mountain-ridge of the Pambak (6 days).

e. Pass of Kasbek.

f. Road to Erivan (*vide* above).

g. Kachetia.—From Signach to Tionethi, *viâ* Telaw. From Marienfeld to Telaw, *viâ* Gambori (1 day). Excursions to the districts of the Tuschs, Pschaws, and Chewsurs can be made from Telaw or from Tionethi. The scenery is said to be wild and grand. Difficult mountain-passes lead northward into the little Tschetschnià, and north-east into Daghestan (valleys of the Argun and of the Andi Koissu); but, the pass from Kwareli to Bottlich excepted (*vide* paragraph Bottlich), I could obtain no information about the former passes.

h. Road to Bakù, *viâ* Nuchà and Schemachà. Excursions to Leghistan from Zakataly and Nuchà; and in the Karabagh from Schemachà and Schuscha.

i. Bakù and Lenkoran (*vide* above).

k. Khanate of Kuba (*vide* Petzholdt).

4. *In Armenia and the Karabagh.*

a. From Alexandrapol to Erivan and the ruins of Ani. From Alexandrapol excursions to Kars (3 days). N.B.—The tourist can ride from Ani direct to Talyn and Sardarabad, *viâ* Kizilkilissa, and thus avoid a portion of uncomfortable road.

b. From Alexandrapol to Lake Goktscha.

c. From Etschmiadzin to Tiflis (*vide* above).

d. The Ararat.

e. The country north and west of the Ararat.

f. From Erivan to Schuscha, *viâ* Nachitschewan, Ordubat, and the monastery of Tatiew (10 days); an excursion much recommended.

g. I could obtain no information regarding the valleys between Lake Goktscha and the Kura steppes, and the town of Jelissawetpol.

5. *In Daghestan and the Tschetschnià.*

a. From Vladikawkas to Weden, *viâ* Groznaja.

b. Difficult but grand passes are said to lead from Vladikawkas, *viâ* Jewdokimowskoje, to Bottlich across the moun-

tains of the little Tschetschniä; but I could obtain no further information regarding them.

c. From Weden to Temirchanschura, *viâ* Bottlich, Chunsak, and Gunib.[9] A shorter route from Gunib to Temirchanschura, *viâ* Gorgebil and Aimaki.

d. Mountain-passes to the South.—From Bottlich to Kwareli (*vide* paragraph Bottlich). The upper valleys of the Avari and of the Kara-Koissu, the valley of the Samur, and the whole of Eastern Daghestan seem to have remained as yet unexplored by tourists.

e. From Chodshalmachi to Derbend, *viâ* Kutischi and Dischlagar (2 days).

f. Excursions into Northern Daghestan (Karanai, Burtunai) from Temirchanschura or from Chazafürt.

TRAVELLING IN PERSIA AND TURKEY IN ASIA.

Whether the enjoyment which a journey through Persia and Turkey in Asia offers can compensate the traveller for the hardships and annoyances which he has to undergo depends more on the character and disposition of each individual traveller than in the case of a journey through the Caucasus. For if, on the one hand, the grand and beautiful scenery of the Caucasus calls forth the admiration of the unprejudiced traveller, on the other hand it often requires a considerable amount of self-denial on his part, in Persia and Turkey in Asia, to receive without prejudice the impressions wrought by whatever is interesting and beautiful amidst so many contrarieties and discomforts. The difficulties of the journey are in themselves not greater, as a rule, than in the Caucasus; but the eye often gets wearied with the lifeless and monotonous scenery which has to be traversed before reaching some beautiful spot. The traveller in this case feels the many little troubles and discomforts much more strongly than in the Caucasus, where each day brings with it new sights and objects of interest, which speedily make him forget all the annoyances that he has undergone. I cannot, therefore, with the same confidence, recommend a journey through

Persia as I do a journey through the Caucasus. Nevertheless I wish to draw the attention of the traveller to the fact that perhaps in no other country will he feel so much his own master and so free from all trammels, and that this feeling, which we have quite lost in Europe, has for a time an indescribable charm; of course only for a time, for in the end everyone longs to return to the restraint of European life. Another fact is also deserving of consideration. Persia and Turkey in Asia are, a few tracts of land excepted, pre-eminently unpicturesque countries. The eye, therefore, gets accustomed in the end to expect but little from nature; and is doubly surprised and gladdened when some spot rises above the general level of barrenness. It finally discovers, after a certain time, beauties of nature which it would never have thought worthy of notice before. Thus it comes that travelling never is without some charms, even in unmistakably dreary countries, provided the traveller keeps constantly on the move. In this sense I may well venture upon saying that a three to six months' tour in those regions would prove enjoyable. A longer journey, or even a stay in the country, could only satisfy the stranger who combines some special purpose, such as a scientific one, with travelling.

LITERATURE.

Literature in regard to Persia and Turkey in Asia is so abundant that every tourist can gather the fullest information concerning the district to be visited before starting on his journey. I will only draw attention to two works, both of which are most useful to the tourist in those countries. The first is a small work, in two volumes: Dr. Polak's 'Persia,' Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1865. The author had resided many years in Persia, as medical attendant to the Shah, and his experiences of land and people are given in a very simple yet attractive form. The accuracy of the descriptions—for which I can vouch, and which is confirmed by other Europeans in Persia—renders it a *vade mecum*. The second is Professor Brugsch's book on the residence in Persia of the

Prussian Embassy (1860–61). I can recommend it as a valuable guide for the principal tours.

MAPS.

A very elaborate English map of Persia is said to exist; and also a Russian one, drawn by the Russian Topographical Bureau. The latter is in four sheets, I believe. Personally I never saw either of them. There are surveys of the frontier districts of Persia and Turkey in Asia along the Caucasus, on the scale of the Caucasian 5-verst map, and published in connection with it; but they are only to be obtained at St. Petersburg. I can recommend the eight sheets of Kiepert's map of Asia Minor, Armenia, Kurdistan, and Azerbijaun; they are very handy, and generally accurate. They reach eastward to the latitude of Kertch, on the Caspian Sea, and thus comprise a rather important portion of North-Western Persia.

SEASON FOR TRAVELLING.

The season for travelling is the same as for the Caucasus, but it may be prolonged to the winter, especially in the southern portions of these countries. The summer is most unhealthy, on account of the heat. The great distances, and the circumstance that the traveller must perform the journey on horseback, renders it necessary to have a liberal margin as regards time. The traveller may calculate on a daily progress of 28 miles on hired horses, with a day of rest after a four days' march; this circumstance reduces the daily average to about 23 miles; or, when taking in account the stay in towns, to 18–19 miles. Shorter trips, which can be made without baggage, are easily accomplished at greater speed, especially on post-horses, which are changed at each station (at distances of 14–28 miles).

EXPENSES OF THE JOURNEY.

The expenses of the journey are smaller than is generally supposed to be the case. They average about one pound

Turkish (about eighteen shillings), or very little more, a day for food, maintenance, service, and the requisite number of saddle and baggage horses. These expenses decrease when prolonged stays are made in towns. Large escorts render the journey more expensive, but then they constitute the only luxuries which travellers can allow themselves; for as regards material existence they are reduced to what the country can offer, which is generally little, and that little very cheap. Since letters of credit can only be cashed in a few larger towns like Teheran, Rescht, Tabreez, and Bagdad, the traveller is obliged constantly to carry cash about with him. English, French, and Turkish gold coins are the most useful; but the tourist must beware of Persian gold coins, many of which are spurious and under weight. Money-changers are to be met with in every town; in country districts an opportunity rarely occurs for changing large coins. The gold *tuman* constitutes the Persian standard coin; it is worth about 8 shillings and 6 pence, and is divided into 10 *qrans* of 20 *shahi* each; ½ qran is called *panabat*. Copper coins are current in coins of 1, 3 *felus* (6 *felus* or *pul* = 1 *shahi*). The Russian 20 and 15 kopeck coins are most popular in Northern Persia; they are taken at 14 and 10 shahi. The traveller will do well to provide himself with a good supply of the former coin, especially as he will gain about 10 per cent. on them as compared with gold, and thereby avoid the difficulties connected with Persian silver coins. The Turkish pound (*lira*), worth about 18 shillings, constitutes the standard coin of Turkey; it is divided into 100 *piastres* (*grusch*), at 40 *para*. But each town in Turkey in Asia, besides the official rate of exchange, has its own peculiar rate, generally a most fictitious one. For instance, the pound (*lira*) would be worth 103 piastres at Mossoul, 105 at Bagdad, 115½ at Damascus, &c. This not only occasions the trouble of reducing to the local currency each part in which the pound is divided (the new Turkish 20-piastre coins, for instance, are rated 21¼ at Bagdad), but it also obliges the traveller to take into account a multitude of older local coins, which often represent absurdly

different values (12¼, 8¾, 2¾ piastres, for instance), and have no currency in other provinces. At Bagdad I saw, besides the new Turkish coins, old Bagdad coins representing 1½, 2, 3, 5, and 6 piastres, which were at a lower rate of exchange than the new ones; Indian rupees, Austrian *Marie-Therese* dollars, new 25-kreutzer coins, old 20-kreutzer, Russian 50, 25-kopeck, and a multitude of other coins of the most varied description. In small transactions they generally calculate in *kamari* (½ piastre) at Bagdad. The *schami* (11¼ piastres) is a much-used coin, especially amongst Bedouins. It is a remarkably fine old coin.

TRAVELLING REQUISITES.

The traveller scarcely requires being provided with official papers, since his European appearance will everywhere secure him a due amount of respect. Yet he will do well to provide himself with a Persian and a Turkish firman. I was in possession of a firman emanating from the Turkish Foreign Office, and wherever I had the opportunity of displaying the yard-long document it never failed to produce the greatest possible effect. Letters of introduction to Europeans living in those countries are most useful; but even without them the traveller can be certain of receiving a friendly welcome, for the European in the East dispenses hospitality in the most charming manner.

The remarks which I have made concerning baggage and provisions in connection with a journey to the Caucasus are also applicable to a journey to Persia and Turkey in Asia. But the amount of these provisions must be calculated for the whole journey, since there scarcely exists a possibility of replenishing the stock. The necessary apparatus for eating and drinking must not be omitted, for the fanatical Sheeite will not lend the Christian a plate or a goblet.

The traveller should always carry his arms with him, not for defence, but as an emblem of his power. Although the revolver never misses its effect when fired off before the wondering crowd, the double barrelled gun is still to be pre-

ferred, because the flash is greater. A breech-loader will easily keep a whole village in check.

An escort is, generally speaking, unnecessary, and it is often a great source of annoyance to the traveller. Besides, he may rest assured that in case of danger the escort will be the first to run away.

In Persia and Turkey in Asia, still more than in the Caucasus, the traveller must be provided with attendants. It behoves a distinguished personage—in which character the European must always appear—to be surrounded with servants; and, on the other hand, each individual servant does so little work, that four of them scarcely perform the duties which a European servant gets through. Their keep, too, is not at all costly. At Bagdad, for instance, we had scarcely arrived when a number of natives presented themselves as our servants. They stayed in our house, did as little work as possible, and were, in the end, quite satisfied with a small gratuity.

LODGINGS.

The traveller will never be at a loss for night-quarters. In the towns the caravansarai offers a room, though without any vestige of furniture and without any lock to the door. If he wishes to see his things safe he will have to carry a padlock about with him and fasten it on to the door. His servants will look to the *cuisine* and obtain all necessary ingredients from the bazaar close by. In villages he will always find some peasant who will deem it an honour to receive the stranger in his cottage. It is true that as a rule the peasant cannot offer him much more than a corner of his stable, a carpet, or straw mats. No payment is ever demanded. The host on receiving one or two qrans over and above the approximate value of the necessaries of life supplied will be quite overjoyed. Should the traveller prefer fresh air to the narrow and dusty villages, he has only to erect his tent wherever he pleases.

MEANS OF CONVEYANCE.

The horse is the only means of conveyance for the traveller. The camel is only used for riding in the Desert, where the horse would find no food. Otherwise the camel is only used as a beast of burthen. Mules are also much used as beasts of burthen; they are very strong and enduring. If the traveller wishes to get along quickly he can make use of the post-horses on the roads mentioned further on; but this mode of travelling will oblige him to leave all baggage behind, save, perhaps, two light chyrdshins.

The post-stations (*tschaparchaneh*) are situated at distances of fourteen to nineteen miles, and the horses—generally wretched-looking nags—are accustomed to gallop the whole distance. A servant, whom the post-master sends as attendant, takes the horses back to their station, and in this manner the traveller can accomplish ninety-five miles per diem. The price per horse and per *farsak* amounts to 1 qran in Persia, and about the same in Turkey. The horse of the attendant has also to be paid for. By joining a caravan progress is slow. This is the cheapest mode of travelling. But the traveller will generally prefer engaging a *tscherwadar*, and thus form his own caravan. I have already given some information about the *tscherwadar*—also called *gatyrdshi*, driver of mules, and *mukary*, in Syria—in the fifth chapter (pages 35–38). In spite of their being a great nuisance *tscherwadars* are necessary evils.

ROUTES.

1. *Rescht* (on the Caspian Sea) *to Teheran*, 182 miles post-road.—Steamers call at Rescht (*Enzeli*) once a week in summer, and fortnightly in winter. First portion of the journey traverses Gilaun, richly wooded; then across the high plateau of Irans to Quazvin.

2. *Astrabad-Teheran* (across Mazenderâun).—Trips to the Demavend, and ascent of this mountain; about 14 days: no post-road. Rather difficult trip to perform; fine scenery.

3. *Teheran, Ispahan, Persepolis, Schiraz, Benderbuschir* (Persian Gulf).—Post-road; principal tour through Persia, 560–600 miles; at least 6 weeks. Steamer to Bombay leaves Benderbuschir fortnightly, as also steamers to Basra and Bagdad.

4. *Teheran, Hamadan, Bagdad.*—Post-road; a month at least.

5. *Hamadan, Ispahan*; 14 days.

6. *Tabreez, Teheran*; 16 days; post-road. Tabreez is reached either from Tiflis, *viâ* Dshulfa, in 8 days; or by the Turkish post-road from Trebizonde, *viâ* Erzeroom (about 470 miles).

7. *Tabreez, Astara* (Caspian Sea); 5–7 days.

8. *Tabreez, Mossoul*; 17 days.

9. *Tabreez-Wan* (Lake Wan).—Famous cuneiform inscriptions and wild mountain scenery. Thence the journey can be continued to either Diarbekir or Erzeroom; and can be accomplished in 3 weeks; difficult travelling.

10. *Lake Urûmia.*—Trip round the lake; two to three weeks' journey from Tabreez.

11. *Mossoul, Bagdad, Damascus* (*vide* 6th and 7th chapters).

12. *Mossoul-Alexandretta, viâ* Diarbekir and Aleppo; about 4 weeks; Turkish post-road.

13. *Wan-Mossoul.*—I could obtain no information about this route, nor about the districts west of the line, Trebizonde, Erzeroom, Wan, Diarbekir, Aleppo.

The foregoing data and hints are, of course, merely suggestive; yet I trust they may prove serviceable to future travellers. Experience is the best guide and the best companion; and after a few weeks' journey the traveller will find it far better to consult his own judgment, based upon practical knowledge, than to seek refuge for advice in the perusal of books.

APPENDIX.

THE following is a summary of my journey with reference to time and distance. As regards the latter I have retained the Russian verst as the standard of length, having become familiar with it in the Caucasus. As compared with other standards, it is as stated below :—

1 German mile = 7 versts.
2 English miles = 3 versts.
15 kilometres = 14 versts.

Dates	Tours	Distance in Russian versts
Aug. 10–11	From Odessa to Sebastopol, by Steamer	300
12	To Bachtchisarai and back, by carriage.	60
12	To Yalta, posting.	83
14–15	At Yalta, drive to Alupka and back .	30
16	To the waterfall near Yalta and back, on horseback	17
17	By Kertch	by steamer 800
18	Novorossisk, Tuapse, and .	
19	Soukhum-kaleh to Poti .	
20	To Kutais, by railway and carriage .	98
21–22	At Kutais; ride to Gelati and back .	21
23	To Twischi, on horseback . . .	42
24	To Urmi, on horseback. . . .	32
25	To Ludshi, on horseback . . .	48
26	To the pass of Latpari and back, on foot and on horseback . . .	20
27	To Lailaschi, on horseback . . .	63
28	To Twischi, on horseback . .	18
29	To Kutais, on horseback . . .	42

SUMMARY—*continued.*

Dates	Tours	Distance in Russian versts
Aug. 30	At Kutais	
31	To Bjelogorie, posting	59
Sept. 1	To Borshom	74
2, 3, 4, 5	At Borshom, excursions on horseback and shooting	50
6	To Achaltzich, posting	47
7	To Nakolakhewi, posting; ride to Wardzia	64
8	To Schischtapa, by carriage	73
9	To Alexandrapol, by carriage	36
10	To Ani and back, by carriage	80
11	To Mastara, by carriage	50
12	To Karasou, by carriage	50
13	To Etschmiadzin, by carriage	18
14	To Erivan, by carriage	18
15	To Aralych, by carriage and on horseback	52
16	To Aghurri, on horseback and on foot	35
17	Ascent of the Kipgöl and ride to Aralych	45
18	To Erivan, on horseback	38
19	To Daratschitschach, posting	53
20	To Caravansary (Istibulack), posting	97
21	To Tiflis, posting	128
22–27	At Tiflis.	
28	To Signach, posting	104
29	To Achmeti, posting	88
30	To Ananur, on horseback	55
Oct. 1	To Kasbek, posting	86
2	To Vladikawkas, posting	44
3	To Groznaja, posting	101
4	To Weden, by carriage	55
5	To Bottlich, on horseback	50
6	To Chunsak, on horseback	56
7	To Gunib, on horseback	40
8	At Gunib; trip to the mountain on horseback	28
9	To Temirschanschura, by carriage and on horseback	120
10	To Petrowsk, posting	47
11–12	At Petrowsk.	
13–14	To Bakù by Derbend, steamer	420
14	To the Sacred Fires and back, by carriage	34
15	To Lenkoran, steamer	205

SUMMARY—*continued.*

Dates	Tours	Distance in Russian versts
Oct. 16	To Astara, on horseback	35
17	To Kaschbinsk, on horseback	18
18	To Namin, on horseback	30
19	To Ardebil, on horseback	23
20	At Ardebil.	
21	To Nêr, on horseback	40
22	To Serâb, on horseback	53
23	To Kalah, on horseback	65
24	To Tabreez, on horseback	60
25-30	At Tabreez.	
31	To Serderub, on horseback	25
Nov. 1	To Goigân, on horseback	35
2	To Chanian, on horseback	45
3	To Tschillik, on horseback	60
4	To Souk-Bulak, on horseback	45
5-6	At Souk-Bulak.	
7	To Paschy, on horseback	42
8	To Rajât, on horseback	40
9	To Dergala, on horseback	37
10	To Rewanduz, on horseback	25
11	At Rewanduz.	
12	To Koniatman, on horseback	28
13	To Derrebrusch, on horseback	28
14	To Mendshel, on horseback	35
15	To Tezcharab, on horseback	45
16	To Mossoul, on horseback	20
17, 18, 19	At Mossoul; ride to Khorsabad and back	50
20	By Nimroud,	
21	Kalah Shergat,	
22	El Fattha,	
23	Tekrit, — Journey by Kellek	500
24	Samara, and	
25	Saadije, to	
26	Bagdad,	
27 to Dec. 7	Stay at Bagdad, and ride to Ctesiphon and back	70
8	To Iskenderije, by camel	57
9	To Hillah, by camel and on horseback	46
10	Excursion to Babylon on horseback, to Hindije by camel	73
11	To Kerbela, by camel	25
12	In the Desert, by camel	38
13	Through the Oasis el Tschiddr, by camel	42

SUMMARY—*continued.*

Dates	Tours	Distance in Russian versts.
14–26	Through the Desert to Palmyra, by camel	640
27–28	To Karjetên, by camel	112
29	To Dsherrûd, by camel . . .	53
30	To Damascus, by camel and on horseback	53
31	At Damascus.	
Jan. 1	To Beyrout, posting	105

Total from Odessa to Beyrout, 145 days—6,972 versts, of which 1,725 by steamer, 500 by kellek, 90 by railway, 1,745 by carriage, 1,862 on horseback, and 1,050 by camel.

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